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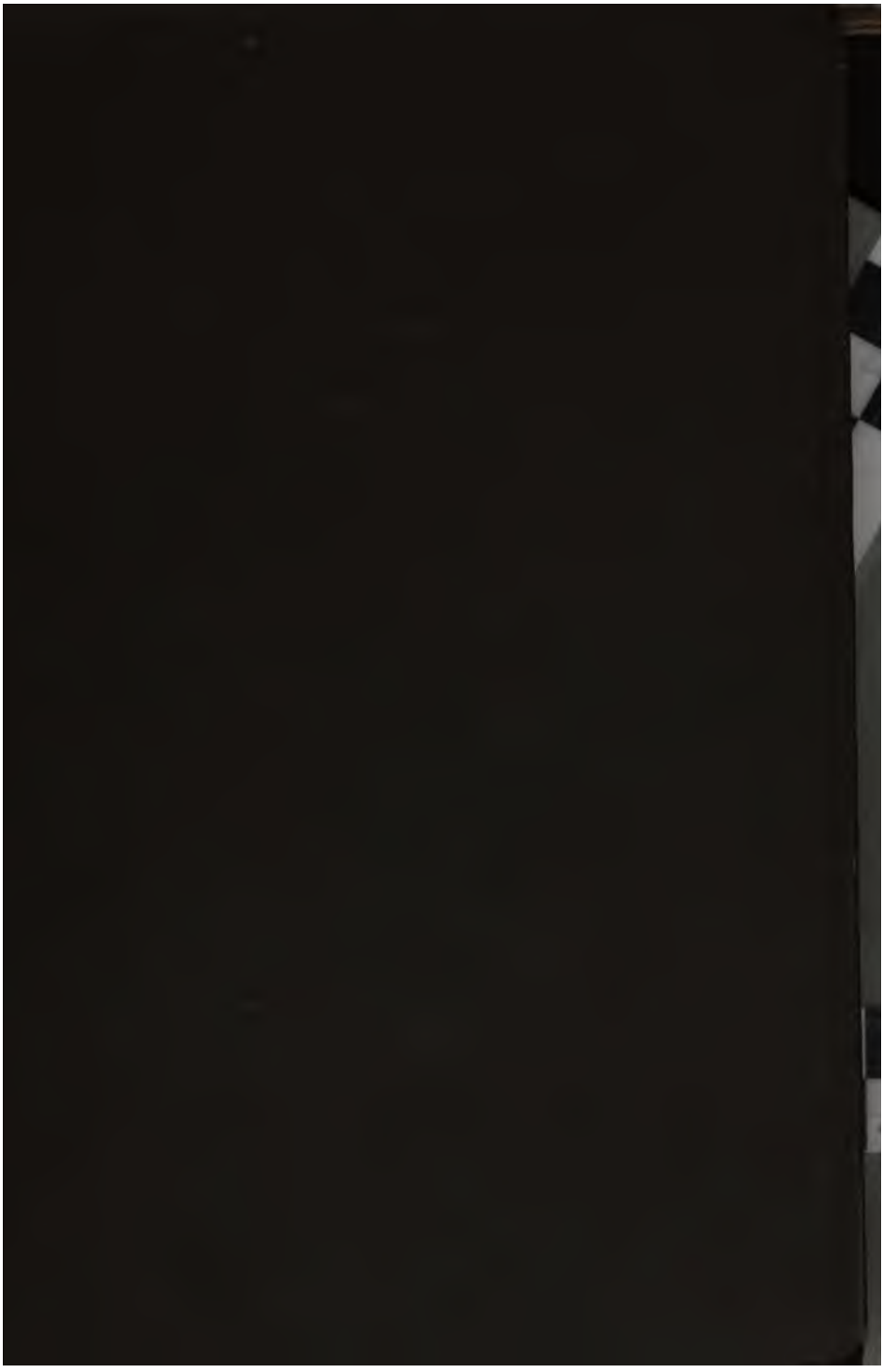

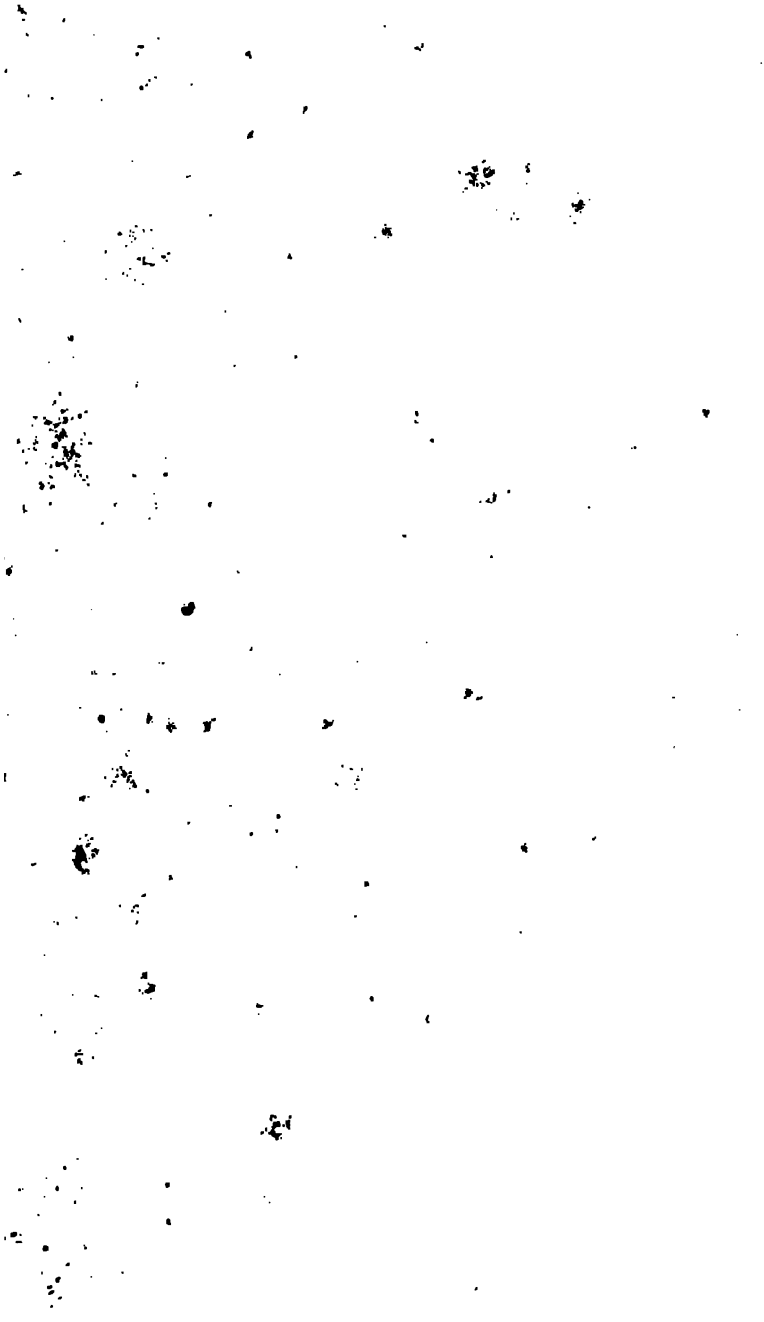

Henry & Mary Veto
Hitherto Julia Greg's Love
January 1st 18

MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS

BY

W. R. GREG

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I.

ROCKS AHEAD AND HARBOURS OF REFUGE.

SOME five or six years ago I ventured, under the allusive, but not inappropriate pseudonym of Cassandra, to call attention to a few of the dangers which appeared to me to threaten our social well-being in some very material points. My representations excited considerable notice, and produced several replies. The country, however, had then been revelling in a long period of almost unexampled prosperity, and was little inclined to listen to gloomy forebodings, or to criticisms of a disparaging character, or to take cognisance of the small clouds on the horizon, "scarcely bigger than a man's hand," which appeared to me ominous of coming storm and darkness. Indications of mischief, which could not be altogether denied, I was held to have exaggerated; I was generally regarded as a prophet of evil, constitutionally disposed to look at everything *en noir;* and on the whole my warnings met with little more belief or practical recognition than did those of my namesake in the days of Troy. Since the publication of my first note of caution a marked "change has come over the spirit of our dream;" the small cloud

has overspread a very considerable part of the sky, the prevalent prosperity of 1872 has been replaced by heavy losses and by distress at once wide-spread and severe; commercial activity has been succeeded by commercial stagnation, disaster and alarm; and, speaking generally, the spirit of sanguine self-confidence and self-satisfaction characteristic of Englishmen in their periods of sunshine, is giving way to a tone of depression and uneasiness not perhaps more dignified, but at least of more hopeful augury for the future, and indicative of a mood of mind in which warnings are more likely to be listened to. "Sweet"—not are, but may be—"the uses of adversity"; and assuredly the lessons of the last two or three years, harsh enough, no doubt, have neither been few, nor trivial, nor conveyed in language difficult to read. On the deplorable and unsuspected unsoundness in certain circles of the mercantile and monetary world, revealed by the disasters of 1878, I am not going to dwell, nor do I wish to enter on the unprofitable and irritating field of mere party politics, though both might furnish texts for sermons more than ordinarily impressive. But I think I am justified, by the bearing of the facts upon two of my former warnings, in reminding my readers, first, that we have been under the management of Ministers, who, rightfully or wrongfully, wisely or unwisely, have changed the spirit of British policy; who, in doing this, and by their mode of doing it, have given great offence and, as far as can be yet discovered, have achieved no

beneficent aims, but have created or exasperated bitter enmities in three quarters of the globe ; who, in the pursuit of this course of action, have increased expenditure heavily and enhanced taxation somewhat, though how much no one can predict and few have the courage honestly to calculate, but enough at least to change a surplus into a deficit ;—and who (which is to our more immediate purpose) in acting thus and entailing these consequences on the country, have been supported, cheered, hounded on, and glorified, not only by the "residuum," but by a majority of those electors whose ignorance, thoughtlessness, and excitable temperament I ventured to point out as valid reasons against too hastily endowing them with that electoral franchise which, in the judgment of all Liberals, they have so sadly misused.

The second point relates to the various dangers which I enumerated as threatening the economic and productive supremacy of Great Britain, unless our artisan classes could be warned and moralised in time. These warnings were unhappily disregarded for the most part by those classes themselves, and made light of, or absolutely denied by too many not only of their professional leaders, but of their more sanguine advocates and advisers among philanthropic natures. The probability of foreign rivalry was not believed in, or was treated as at least distant and problematic ; the alleged deterioration of British labour was stoutly contested ; in the undeniably unfortunate disputes between the workmen and their employers, it was

maintained that the former were generally right and the objects they aimed at were at all events desirable and probably attainable; while it was confidently urged that the artisans might be trusted to understand and manage their own interests better than their masters could do for them. The experience of the last two years, and more especially the disastrous proceedings of 1878, have lowered the confident tone of the soberer among the workmen's friends, and brought about, more speedily than I had hoped, and far more painfully than I could wish, a recognition of many facts once noisily denied, and justified assuredly nearly all the neglected warnings of Cassandra. The state of trade has been stagnant, gloomy, and disastrous in the extreme, and it cannot be denied that much of its deplorable condition has not been immediately traceable to the specific causes which I pointed out as so ominous in the approaching times. But still less can it be controverted—indeed it is almost universally admitted—that this condition has been enormously aggravated by the almost incredible blunders and perversity of the working classes themselves, all the more disheartening because the true facts and bearings of the case have been fairly and anxiously laid before them by friends whose sincere and well-proved sympathy should have secured at least a patient hearing.

It has been shown by practical proofs and special instances that the possibility and even imminence of foreign competition in more than two or three of

our established industries, which we asserted some years ago, has turned out anything but unreal or exaggerated. It is needless, and would perhaps be tedious, to cite examples or to go into details; they are notorious to all who have followed the disturbances and conflicts which led to such ruinous losses and so much ill-blood during the last year. Orders and contracts, which might have given adequate, and possibly even profitable, occupation to our artisans, had over and over again to be declined by capitalists here, and were taken up in continental countries, simply because the men, while fully recognising the disastrous state of trade, obstinately refused to accept any reduction in the rate of wages which were legitimate and possible only in prosperous times, and virtually insisted on a selfish and unjust exemption from sharing in the misfortunes of their employers. It has proved ineffectual to remind them that losses of orders and contracts, thus caused and thus begun, mean in the end, and probably an early end, the loss of the entire trade thus rashly played with; and that foreign rivals, thus gratuitously despised, will not readily give up what our folly has once thrown into their hands.

Similar incomprehensible and suicidal errors have pervaded the proceedings of nearly the whole of the artisan classes during the past year, and curiously enough of many of the best paid miscellaneous labourers as well. Some of their most energetic friends have endeavoured to persuade and enlighten

them, but hitherto almost entirely without success. Strikes have been all but universal; at least, they have been the rule rather than the exemption. They have been attended by two peculiar features, both condemnable, but one certainly, though not quite unprecedental, never so general or so prominent or so uncontrovertible as of late. The first is, the extent to which the funds of the Unions have been lavished on "strike-pay," I might say unwarrantably lavished, because the *original* intention of these funds was to lay up resources for interrupted employment, or "bad times," or failure of capacity of earnings during sickness or accident, though often no doubt, of late especially, levies from wages have been made ostensibly and avowedly collected distinctly for the purpose of supporting trade disputes and strikes. The amount of these funds thus wasted must be reckoned by hundreds of thousands of pounds—taking in the whole perhaps by millions.[1] To this extent have

[1] We have no reliable means of knowing the aggregate amount of the funds collected by these Unions, nor the mode of their expenditure. One of their principal defenders, however, has given some figures which show how large they must be. Mr George Howell states in a recent article in *Fraser's Magazine*, that the expenditure of four of the greatest of these associations in 1877 reached £215,664, "exclusive of strike-pay" he says. Of this £126,000 or more than one-half was distributed to men "out of work." The accumulated "funds in hand" of these four societies he states to be £446,323. The payments which produce these funds are said to be only 1s. a week per head, and the strike-pay to vary from 10s. to 15s. *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1879. The great masons' strike in London, which collapsed after a conflict of thirty weeks, began, it is reported, with

the savings of the operatives been simply thrown away; the operatives themselves impoverished and disheartened, and prevented from in time becoming capitalists, which some at least of them no doubt must have looked forward to. The other feature is, that in these strikes against a reduction of wages (here and there even for an advance, incredible as it may seem) they were almost universally and obviously hopeless, and *usually recognised avowedly as such* by the leaders of the workmen themselves. They had no justification whatever, not even a plausible one, nor as far as could be discovered, any distinct meaning whatever. The mere fun of fighting seemed to some the motive cause. Some of the less charitable observers were inclined to regard the real *causa causans* to be the necessity felt by their official chiefs for assigning in action a presentable *raison d'être* for their existence. But without recurring to any such discreditable suggestion, this much at least is certain, that while in times of brisk trade and large demand and scanty supply of labour strikes are often warrantable and usually successful—if indeed differences between the contending parties are suffered to reach the point of striking—strikes in periods of stagnant and unprofitable business like

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a special levy of £300 a week, and a balance in hand of £15,000, and after spending it is calculated about £50,000, has left nearly 500 men permanently out of work. *Capital and Labour*, March 20, 1878. Another return, but evidently an imperfect one, gives £250,000 as the annual income (aggregate) of the larger Unions.

1878, when mills and collieries, and furnaces, and foundries, by the score, are stopped or put upon short time, are foredoomed to failure, and are therefore self-condemned. In a word, they indicate and establish one of three conclusions—often and probably all three—either grievous misguidance of the artisans by their advisers; or, that the artisans have altogether escaped from the control of their recognised leaders; or, as more frequently the case than is believed, that the wiser counsels of the older men have been overpowered by the rashness of the younger unmarried men, who either do not remember or have refused to profit by the experience of former struggles and the sufferings they entailed.

The more buoyant of the critics who contested my former warnings, even while admitting the basis of truth they might contain, insisted that they were unwarrantably over-coloured; that the people were growing wiser and better educated year by year; especially were becoming rapidly conversant with sounder notions of political economy; that I had no right to appeal to past blunders as indicative of future ones; and that the new generation would be certain to bring a more sensible class of operatives to the front. To a considerable extent I shared these hopeful prospects, though I was less sanguine than most as to the rapidity or thoroughness of the advance predicted. I confess to sad and heavy discouragement. Never during the experience of a generation and a half can I remember to have seen the artisans through-

out the length and breadth of the land acting so entirely in defiance of common sense and right feeling, and with so total a disregard of plain and repeated warning. This may be said of the *employés* in nearly every branch of industry—spinners and weavers, colliers, dock labourers, iron-founders, builders, ship-builders, engineers, and a host of less important avocations. Labourers, perhaps even in want of a meal, will be idle rather than accept 2*s.* 6*d.* where they have been accustomed to earn 3*s.* 6*d.* Nay, much more than this: they have constantly resorted to law-breaking and outrage in order to prevent fellow-workmen, more sensible, peaceful, and nearer to starvation, from availing themselves thankfully of the earnings they had spurned. They have *forced* inaction and want upon thousands who were eager and clamorous for offered employment simply because they needed to be fed. In many places, and systematically in Liverpool, in Sheffield, in Blackburn and elsewhere, they have carried on their contests by unscrupulous intimidation, which is naked cruelty and injustice, because only by such means could strikes under existing conditions be sustained. Even this is not all: the roughs have been let loose against the property and persons of their employers, and violence and incendiarism on a formidable scale have occurred in districts where scenes of this sort had been almost or altogether unexampled. This is a harsh and positive indictment, but who can say that it is in any particular overcharged? And what has been the object

and significance of it all? Simply, in naked exactitude, because these artisans, whom we hoped were so advanced towards better sentiments and sounder views, were determined not to bear their portion—usually a moderate as well as a deferred portion—of those disastrous times and grievous losses which had hitherto fallen exclusively upon their employers, but which those employers felt unwilling and often unable longer to sustain. How, under this combination of disheartening spectacles, are we to keep our confidence in the timely wisdom of our operatives, either to maintain the foreign manufacturing rivalry which lies before us, and which every year becomes more severe, or to use soberly and righteously the growing power which is being put into their hands? As to the first question, do not let us deceive ourselves as to its precise bearings. I am not prepared to contend that the general depression under which we are now suffering is not mainly and primarily the reaction from the over-production of the years which preceded 1873, and that it may not therefore soon pass away. I will not even argue that in spite of the competition of energetic rivals which is rising all around us, and of the short-sighted protectionist legislation which has been resorted to to foster it, England may still for many years be able to keep her manufacturing productiveness and exports up to the level they had just attained. But this, as I pointed out some years ago, will not be enough, or nearly enough. We need, not only to maintain our present height in these

respects, but to advance year by year. England's continued prosperity is dependent upon her continuous progress. Her population augments at the rate of about one per cent. per annum. If the well-being of those increasing numbers is to be secured, her industrial production must increase *pari passu*, and her commerce and her exports must go ahead in the future as they have done in the past. She has reached her present wealth by maintaining her industrial supremacy. It will not suffice to keep where she is: she must continue to advance as she is used to do; that is, to keep in front of the trade of the world. But even this statement does not comprise the whole gravity of the position. Year by year our imports are increasing at a very rapid rate, and those imports are purchased and paid for by our exports. Now of these *a larger proportion every year consists of articles of food.*[1] I am not,

[1] Mr Caird, the great authority on these subjects, writes as follows (*Landed Interest*) :—The progressive increase of foreign supplies during the past twenty years (1857-78) is marvellous. The value of foreign cereal and animal food imported into the United Kingdom has increased from £35,000,000 in 1857 to £110,000,000 in 1875. The greatest proportional increase has been in the importation of animal food. Living animals, meat (fresh and salted), fish, poultry, eggs, butter and cheese, have risen (1857-76) from £7,000,000 to £36,000,000 per annum. More than one-half of the farinaceous articles imported, other than wheat, are used in the production of beer and spirits. When the price of meat in this country about fifteen or twenty years ago (1858-63) began to move steadily up, rising in a few years from 5*d.* to 7*d.*, 9*d.*, and even 12*d.* a pound; enterprise, with skill and capital, were called into rapid action to meet the

as many are, inclined to feel or to affect alarm at this dependence on foreign lands for our supplies. On the contrary, I feel enhanced security in the vast extent of the area from which we draw them. But assuredly I should begin to feel grave uneasiness if the production of our articles of exchange—the purchase-money of those indispensable supplies—were doomed to fall away in consequence of the folly or the conceit or the supineness of our workmen,—if at the very time when our working men were consuming more they were producing less, and were increasing their wants and

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growing demand. . . . The cost of transporting live animals from great distances is obviously considerable. This could be abated by the importation of fresh meat, and by the aid of specially contrived steam conveyance; large quantities of fresh meat have come from America during the colder part of the year. The Americans are greater consumers of meat, man for man, than the English. The English producer has the advantage of at least 1d. a pound for cost and risk of transport, as against his American competitor—an advantage equal to £4 on an average ox. Of this natural advantage nothing can deprive him, and with this he may rest content. In 1868, the foreign supplies of the principal articles to the people of the United Kingdom was 20 per cent. (one-fifth) of the whole. In 1878, it has become 40 per cent.; as regard wheat, we now receive our bread in equal proportions from our own fields and from the foreigner. . . . In the United Kingdom we appear to have approached a point in agricultural production beyond which capital can be otherwise more profitably laid out than in further attempting to force our poorer class of soils. It has become cheaper for us, as a nation, to get the surplus of the richer soils of America and Southern Russia, or India." A valuable return of the Board of Trade called for by Sir George Balfour, gives *the following figures of the consumption per head* of imported articles of food (animal and cereal) in the last thirty years. Its increase is surprising, being more than threefold.

their demands, while squandering and reducing their means of satisfying either.

The rocks ahead of our course are plain enough, and the period of adversity that we are passing through is making them manifest to thousands who, three years ago, resolutely shut their eyes. The recognition makes way but slowly—the more slowly because our rulers are so averse to admit the extent or the gravity of the facts before them, conscious that, however unjustly, these facts are to be held to reflect discredit on their rule. I doubt whether any imputation of this nature can fairly be maintained. I doubt whether the Government is specially to blame for the depression of trade and the consequent suffering of the working classes, and of others more highly placed in the social scale, except in as far as we may be entitled to expect from them a clearer and quicker perception of coming circumstances, than from others less eminently placed, and, under those circumstances, a curtailment instead of an enhancement of expenditure. The truth is that *all* classes have been to blame, and to blame much in the same way—the upper ten thousand probably more than the humbler ranks, as having wider means of knowing facts and more trained habits and capacities of thought. I doubt if any one of the *couches sociales* has the right to throw stones upon the others in reference to the calamity that has come upon us all. Reckless self-indulgence, extravagant expenditure, determination to enjoy the present and leave the future to take care of itself, have been character-

istic of all alike. All have "made haste to be rich"; few, if any, to store up their riches. Five years of prosperity, nearly five years of sudden and astonishing profits, excited the spirits, often turned the heads of masters and men alike in most of our largest industries and of several branches of commerce; but the gains of those years, in place of being hoarded up to carry British artisans and merchants through the reactionary and disastrous years which were to follow, were too often lavishly and unprofitably squandered, as if reaction was not a thing to be dreamed of—so that when the turn of the tide came it found most of our productive classes unprovided, and many, both high and low, unprovided and in danger. Much scarcely warranted vituperation has been cast upon capitalists who boldly, perhaps rashly, extended their works to meet a brisk and unwonted demand, opened new coal mines, and built new furnaces and factories, for the demand was real and would not be ignored. Nor are the artisans and operatives to be condemned because, in such a time of glowing sunshine, they insisted on sharing in the warmth, and forced up their wages to perhaps an extravagant degree. Where both parties were alike, if not equally, to blame was not that they made hay while the sun was shining, but that the hay was not laid up for winter seasons, but was consumed as fast as it was made.[1]

[1] Mr W. H. Smith, in a recent and instructive speech to his constituents at Westminster a few weeks ago, was inclined to doubt the alleged inadequacy of saving habits among our work-

Here we begin to see glimpses of Harbours of Refuge amid the gloom and storm, or to recognise at least the direction in which the vessel's course must be steered to find safety. The essential truth is very simple, and when once pointed out, is very obvious. We have nearly all of us been living up to our income in those bright times; many, no doubt, beyond it; the natural consequence is, that now hundreds of thousands are reduced to live upon their capital—or on the capital of others. Thousands, moreover, have been guilty of the folly (which might be called by a harsher name) of aping the modes of life of those above them in the social scale. What we have to do is to fall back upon common prudence and common sense, and cheerfulness and security will once more come in view.

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ing population. "If there were universal distress," he said, "there would be some disposition to avoid putting money in the savings banks. People would be withdrawing their money from the savings banks. I find this: That on January 11, 1877, the deposits in the savings banks were £70,963,555; in January 1878, £73,534,000—that is to say, in the year 1878 an additional £2,600,000 had been deposited in the savings banks. Well, on January 11, 1879, after a year of very great depression, the working classes had managed to increase these deposits by £1,300,000—that is to say, the deposits, which were in 1878 £73,534,000, were in January 1879, £74,637,000. I think that is a very significant fact. It shows that after all, though there is great distress, there is also a considerable amount of what I call local wealth. Seventy-four millions represent the savings of the working classes. The increase of £1,300,000 represents the amount which they could afford to put by after having spent all that was necessary for their own comfort, after having withdrawn all that was necessary to keep them alive. That was going on this year since the 11th of January in a very remarkable

Perhaps I estimate even more seriously than most, both the reality and the gravity of the present crisis. I admit the sharpness of the warning that has been sent us. But I see in it no reason for despondency—to which indeed Englishmen are seldom prone; but every reason for the adoption, individually and nationally, of sounder principles of action, of less luxurious and self-indulgent habits of life, of more conscientious and sagacious industry, and of that systematic economy in which as a people we are so woefully and undeniably deficient. I do not believe, and I refuse to admit, that Britons are intrinsically wanting in the gifts requisite to win and keep supremacy in any line to which they may devote their energies. They only need

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manner. I have tables from the Post Office which forms only a portion of these figures, showing that on the 18th of January the deposits were £266,000 for the week against withdrawals of £178,000, being a balance in favour of an increase of deposits of upwards of £88,000. On the 25th of January the deposits were £276,000 against withdrawals £184,000; so that the difference in favour of deposits was £92,000; and on the 1st of February the deposits were £312,000 against £136,000 withdrawals, so that the deposits were more than double the amount of the withdrawals." The figures are very interesting. Their weak point is in the assumption that these "£74,000,000 represent the *savings of the working classes*" exclusively or even mainly. They may represent to a great extent the savings of various portions of the poor and the industrious specially among the lower middle ranks. But it is more than doubtful whether the artisans as a rule, the manufacturing operatives of whom I was chiefly speaking, favour "Savings Banks" as a mode of investment. Unfortunately they too often prefer "Local Friendly Societies" and Trade Unions. Moreover Mr Smith omits to notice that in the year 1878 the balance of the increase in store was not equal to the interest due on the deposits.

somewhat less conceit as to their own incontestable pre-eminence, somewhat better education, and considerably wiser guides, or sagacity to choose such, perhaps also—*absit omen*—a harsher lesson of suffering than has yet been forced on them. I am convinced, too, that these amended habits of life and thought — difficult, no doubt, to begin with—*need* involve no deterioration, no steps downwards or backwards, in any of the essential comforts and respectabilities of family existence (I say nothing as to mere idle luxuries), probably, indeed certainly, the reverse. By adopting these they will conquer a securer, less anxious and less precarious position, for the next generation at all events, if the passing one be too rigid and too old to change.[1]

[1] The following extract from the *Economist's* Commercial Review of 1878 will be interesting:—Within the last twelve years our labouring classes have had opportunities of setting aside a considerable amount, and there ought to be no reason for the excessive distress complained of at this moment. A certain amount has doubtless been saved by the thrifty and careful, as witnessed by the larger amount held by the Savings Banks, Friendly, and Building Societies,[1] a large portion of which

[1] The amount held by the Savings Banks in 1866 and 1877 was as follows:—

	Trustee Banks.	Post Banks.	Total.
1866 .	£36,000,000	£8,121,000	£44,000,000
1877 .	44,000,000	28,741,000	72,000,000
Increase			£28,000,000

The amount held by friendly societies in 1865 was £5,362,000, and in 1874, £9,039,000.—increase, £3,676,000; total of both savings banks and friendly societies in ten years, £32,113,000 or an average of £3,200,000 per annum. On December 31, 1877, the liabilities of building societies, in which the working classes have largely invested, to the holders of subscription or incomplete shares, of completed or realised shares, and of preferential shares, to depositors, and also for unappropriated profits, were—in England and Wales £23,916,000; Scotland, £1,126,000; and Ireland, £678,000.—total, £25,720,000.

In writing thus hopefully we can point to examples and illustrations at our door as proofs that we are indulging in no baseless dream. Eight years ago our nearest neighbours had to encounter a reverse almost unparalleled among modern nations, to pay a debt or a fine (whichever we may call it) about equally unexampled, to meet a drain upon their resources which to critical and observant Europe appeared too exhausting. France had to part with a considerable portion of her territory, to promise an indemnity of five milliards, and to provide taxation to meet this enormous

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belongs to the working classes. But a considerable proportion of the extra amount earned, especially from 1871 to 1873, has been spent in maintaining a standard of comfort higher, probably, than a labouring man is warranted in looking for, unless he has first put by something for the rainy day, and more especially in an excessive expenditure for eating, drinking, and smoking.[2] A wiser and more economical appropriation of wages is the great want of the British working population. In no other country are the wages more liberal, but in no other country are they more wastefully used than in the United Kingdom. Here there is scope enough for practical education touching the moral, quite as important as the intellectual, bringing up of the new generation.

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2 The consumption of the following imported and excisable articles of food and drink per head of the population in 1866 and 1877 was as follows: —

Articles.		1866.	1877.	Increase.
Bacon and Ham	per lb.	2·13	8·04	277 per cent.
Wheat . .	,,	104·50	203·26	94 ,,
Sugar . . .	,,	21·21	64·96	57 ,,
Tea . . .	,,	3·42	4·52	32 ,,
Tobacco . .	,,	1·39	1·49	10 ,,
Spirits . . .	gallons	1·01	1·23	21 ,,
Malt . . .	bushels	1·82	1·92	5 ,,

sum. There was no help for it. She accepted the tremendous fate, spent no time in whining, but set to work with admirable fortitude and spirit to redeem the vast misfortune, complicated as it was with revolution and civil war. The incalculable wealth and the unexpected strength that lie hid in economic habits when inherent in a nation then came to light and astonished all Europe. We began to realise the full meaning of the maxim, *Magnum vectigal est parsimonia.*[1] The immense resources of a country where every peasant was a proprietor and almost every citizen a patriot, enabled her to nearly double her debt without impairing her credit, and to nearly double her revenue without crushing her productive powers; and the result has been that probably France has suffered less from the calamitous years that have swept over the world than either Germany, Great Britain, America, or Russia. How can we seriously entertain any doubt that, if English artisans as a rule had the careful habits, and the modest, though thoroughly *comfortable,* requirements, of the French peasantry; still more if they were aided and encouraged in the practice of these unfamiliar virtues by the example of those captains of industry who have

[1] Mr Smith's comparison of the taxation, *local and imperial,* of the three great capitals of the world is curious and rather consolatory:

	£	s.	d.	
London, . . .	3	8	11	per head.
Paris, ...	5	14	1	,,
New York, . . .	6	14	7	,,

hitherto taught them rather how to make money than how to hoard it,—we might have tided over far more easily and speedily a crisis imcomparably less severe ?[1]

It is now nearly a generation since our great philosophical economist laid his finger on one of the

[1] We may be reminded of one special difference between the French and English people, which makes saving so much easier and more natural to the former, viz., their much slower rate of increase. To this may be added that their laws of inheritance foster habits of economy, which the English ones certainly do not. This is true enough ; but to discuss fully the bearings of the subject would take us too far from our present topic. It may suffice at present to say that we have the vast and almost inexhaustible resources of emigration, of which our neighbours make, perhaps can make, comparatively so little use. England thus disposes of those redundant numbers which in France do not appear. In the thirty-nine years, 1837-76, there left the United Kingdom as voluntary emigrants, destined chiefly to North America and Australia, 8,000,000 of persons, or an average of 22,800 persons per annum. It has been computed that each emigrant was worth to the country or colony to which he went, quite £175 ; that is to say, speaking in commercial language, his infancy, education, training, skill, and the stock of clothes, money, and goods he brought with him were worth £175 to the new country of his choice. On the average of the thirty-nine years, 1837-76, this country has contributed £40,000,000 per annum in emigrants to the progress of North America and Australia, and no discussion of the progress of these new countries can be of any value which does not assign due prominence to this wonderful phenomenon. Of late years the emigration to Australia has assumed larger dimensions. In 1866-70 it was 9 per cent. of the whole ; in 1876 it was 29 per cent. Shorter and cheaper passages to Australia have produced a large effect. No part of the social changes of the last forty years is more satisfactory, both to the mother-country and the colonial and foreign countries than this voluntary emigration undertaken by the free choice, and paid for out of the savings, of the emigrants themselves.

most serious blots in our social economy—the unsoundness of our distributive system; that is, the excessive proportion which the *distributors* bear to the *producers*, the number of retailers of consumable articles in comparison to the need for them. Retail trade required, in reference to other occupations, little professional skill or knowledge, and little capital; and in consequence many scarcely qualified easily took up this line of business, or added it to their other functions. The mischief grew, and with it grew its many disastrous consequences. Small shopkeepers multiplied beyond any actual demand; they competed with each other for a business inadequate for all, and those who might have made a decent and an honest livelihood out of a hundred customers could not do so out of fifty. Those, again, who have capital sufficient to enable them to buy their stores cheaply because on a large scale, might be satisfied with moderate profits in retailing them; those who were destitute of these advantages were forced either to ask higher prices or to serve out inferior qualities. Those, too, who gave credit to their customers did not always get paid: thence came the practice of making punctual purchasers pay for those who paid tardily or perhaps never paid at all—at once a cruelty and an injustice. Unsoundness thus crept into the whole practices of retailers in smaller towns and among poorer populations, and buyers—that is, the whole body of customers—were mulcted, paid more than they need have done, or ought to have done, and found that their

earnings did not go as far as was essential. This was the case in manufacturing districts. In the metropolis and in the larger cities the same unsoundness prevailed, in a somewhat varied form and on a more extensive scale. A larger proportion of those who dealt at retail shops were wealthy, and cared comparatively little what prices they paid; numbers were too busy to look closely after such matters, and were growing rich fast enough to despise them; and these two classes gave the tone to others. Numbers of them, moreover, were not over-punctual in their payments, as well as too important to be pressed, and therefore could not with any propriety demur to 'the inflammation of their weekly bills.' Thus, in the late prosperous times, since the advent of free trade, there has been an alarming growth of household expenditure which has at last led to a natural and most wholesome reaction—out of which, unless I am much mistaken, there will come a safety, both moral and economical, the extent of which will amaze many and prove a genuine "harbour of refuge" to not a few.

The truth is—to speak it broadly—that the sudden and enormous prosperity of the country and the extraordinary advance in the prices of nearly all articles of general consumption during the ten years which preceded the actual collapse—coupled with the natural and inevitable rise in the style and standard of living as it is called—were fast bringing to ruin the numerous classes known as "people of fixed incomes." The luxuries of the parents were becoming the necessaries

of the children; and what had been competence to one generation was, or was being deemed to be, a scanty pittance to the next. The civil servants, the fundholders, the officers of the army and navy, and clergymen above all others, felt that if they were not to sink altogether into a lower social position, they must bestir themselves in earnest. They did so bestir themselves; and a few among them, instinctively discerning where the fault lay, combined to correct it and establish "Co-operative Stores." Never was there a more simple, more timely, more practical, more successful, more wholesome or righteous movement, or one which we incline to believe will approach nearer to a social revolution, and rectify, directly or indirectly, several symptoms in England's condition that may be safely characterised as unhealthy.

In the course of the controversy that has arisen out of this movement, many absurd aspersions, and not a few thoroughly unjust ones have been vented on both sides;[1] but the irritation of conflicting interests will

[1] We need not enter into these allegations and disputes. Where the ordinary retailers have any foundation for declaring that co-operative establishments are unduly favoured by law, as in escaping the income tax while dividing large profits among their shareholders,—by all means let this inequity be rectified, by treating them as, what in fact they have become—Joint-Stock companies. But as to the indignation expressed against those establishments conducted on the original principle of supplying themselves cheaply by purchasing on a large scale and selling cheaply by selling only for prompt payment, and who make no profits because they lower their prices as they find the prices they had fixed yield a surplus over their expenses, this indignation is manifestly misapplied. While the outcry against civil

gradually subside, and the motives to the movement are obviously too strong to be effectually resisted. The truth of the case is in fact too clear, and lies too near the surface to be either concealed or contested. The wealthy, who do not need to spare their shillings or their guineas, but who do wish to have the ordinary transactions of life made smooth and facile, and surrounded by as much beauty and splendour as are attainable, will deal with butchers and grocers who come to their doors for orders and take all trouble off their hands; will give their custom to tailors and dressmakers who suit their tastes; will frequent shops which lie within easy reach, whose plate glass and decorations attract their fancy, and the fashionable locality of their premises involve high rents; and will have to pay, and be content to pay, for all these facilities and pleasures: and no one can fairly maintain that the tradesmen who supply their wants on this comfortable fashion are not entitled to be well paid for the expenditure which this fashion involves. Equally, on the other hand, must the more numerous classes with fixed and inadequate incomes, whose peace and respectability in life depends on keeping within these incomes, who must watch and calculate

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servants, naval or military officers, clergymen or others, who give their vacant hours to superintending such establishments which are and must be practically *managed* by paid *employés*, is too unfounded even to deserve discussion. It is on a par with the objections of those who would prohibit struggling barristers from devoting their unemployed evenings in writing for the Press.

every shilling of expenditure, and who grudge no time or trouble which will enable them to limit its amount, be permitted to follow their course without being sneered at or reviled. They find thousands of tradesmen ready enough to meet their requirements ; and they find, too, that by combination they can attain their ends to the mutual gain of all parties concerned. For this is one of the features of the change of system which is now in progress : the primary producers, makers, and purveyors of the articles of consumption usually *obtain more* for those articles than they used to do, while the purchasers of them *pay less;* the difference being that in the transference from the original creator to the ultimate consumer, the articles pass through fewer hands, and in a less costly fashion, and are mulcted in fewer and minor profits. The supernumerary distributors alone will be edged out, and have to find occupation and livelihood elsewhere. The distributors who hold their ground, doing a far larger business and in a more legitimate manner, will make at once more considerable, and less questionable, gains.

The essence of the whole question lies in these two points :—*first*, what is practically and usually the difference between the price which the actual consumer or purchaser of any articles of food, clothing, or furniture, pays for it, and the share of that price which ultimately reaches the producer — say, the farmer, the importer, the tailor, the shoemaker, the dressmaker, the upholsterer, and others who among

them provide for the hundred wants of our complicated lives?—and, *secondly*, what proportion of this difference is really necessary and legitimate. Few who have not been compelled to go into this inquiry have an adequate notion of how great this difference is, nor how small a part of it is genuinely inevitable. We have no intention of entangling ourselves in interminable controversy by venturing on positive assertions or precise figures. But a few suggestions may induce our readers to believe that we are not very wide of the mark when we express our conviction that if we brought adequate information, sagacity, vigilance, and *trouble* to bear upon our proceedings, the average expenditure of most of our households might be reduced 25 per cent. at least, without the loss of one single comfort worth retaining. Let any one ascertain from a farmer friend, the price which he receives per carcase from the butcher he supplies, or from a Liverpool merchant the price at which his cargoes of dead meat or live bullocks are sold on arrival from America, and compare it with the price the identical butcher or purchaser insists upon charging him for similar qualities of beef or mutton. Or let him, knowing—if a merchant or broker, knowing to his cost—that of late the tea, or the coffee, or the sugar he is in the habit of importing will only fetch in the market 75 per cent. of its price two or three years ago, apply to his family grocer for something like a proportionate reduction in his quarterly bills, and see the curt refusal he will receive, as if the bare

proposal was amazing; or let any man accustomed to deal with an ordinary West End tailor—not an especially extravagant or fashionable one—find himself obliged by press of losses to inquire what price he really *need* pay for an equally well-made suit furnished by some a little further or a little less known, and then calculate the difference in his family expenditure the transfer of his custom in that one item will effect. Or, finally, let him take a little pains, and he will be surprised to find that a pair of boots for which he has been accustomed to pay 35s. or 40s. in Mayfair without a murmur, can be obtained in quarters scarcely nearer Temple Bar, just as good, quite as lasting and almost as seemly for 14s. or 21s., with no better reason for the difference than that on inquiry he may learn that the latter article is "country made." In a word, while the wholesale cost of many articles of general consumption has dropped 30 per cent., how few of us have been able to obtain a reduction of even 10 per cent. from our retail suppliers,—at least till it was made clear that the alternative was the transfer of our custom to "the Stores." In conclusion, has not the conviction been gradually forced upon all most careful housekeepers dealing with inexpansive incomes of £2500 a year or under, that—what with illicit connivance between their servants and their trades-people in the form of "tips," and laxity as to weight and quantities, *and* eschewing or neglecting the righteous claims of ready money, *and* paying for the bad debts of slipping fellow-customers, to say nothing

of their own idleness and lack of vigilance—they have been in the habit undeniably of simply wasting, through one channel or another, at least one-fourth of their annual expenditure,—which in future they will be resolute to save ?

Inevitably, in the course of a change from an unhealthy to a thoroughly sound system of dealing between man and man—as in all analogous improvements since our complicated social arrangements grew up, some parties will suffer and find the ground cut from under them. All that can be confidently asserted is that they cannot mend matters by opposing what is at once irresistible, righteous, and for the good of the mass of the community. Unquestionably many retail dealers will have to abandon a business which they have rarely found a satisfactory or profitable one, or one possible to carry on without resorting to practices more or less questionable. Many more will be driven to change from an unsound and unsafe system to a sound and safe one. Many who are now competitors will find it their interest to be associates instead. Still, numbers of the weaker, and least qualified, and least wanted, will be crushed out ; but few probably or none whom it is the interest of the community to preserve ;—and these will ere long, we may be pretty certain, be absorbed into other avocations.

II.

FOREIGN POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN—IMPERIAL OR ECONOMIC?

THERE are two opposite and hostile schools of foreign policy prevalent in England, based on quite distinct principles, breathing a different temper, and aiming at irreconcilable results. Each has a great deal to say for itself, each can be defended by very powerful arguments, each sets before itself respectable and even righteous issues; and we do not know that either is entitled to despise or to denounce the other. Each appeals to distinct doctrines, and will be a favourite with different characters and dispositions. We are not inclined to pronounce dogmatically in favour of either. What is perfectly clear, however, is that it is increasingly important, and will soon become absolutely essential, that the country should definitively and decidedly choose between them. Its credit, its greatness, its success, and, what is more important still, its beneficence and repute as a nation, depend upon the choice being made. The determination still lies within our reach. Whatever be the class of aims we finally resolve to set before us, we need not question our ability to attain them, provided only the resolve be

national, deliberately taken, and unswervingly pursued. What can bring us neither respect, nor gratitude, nor grandeur, nor friends, is to come to *no* decision—to stumble on from opportunity to opportunity, from crisis to crisis, with no clear, fixed, persistent foreign policy whatever—to fall first under the guidance of one school of statesmen, and then under their rivals and antagonists—to be swayed to-day by one set of doctrines, to be tempted and dazzled by purposes of one character, and to-morrow by their exact opposites—to profess this year the most generous and spreading doctrines, and next year the most selfish and confined, and to hold language in conformity thereto—in a word, to pose before Europe alternately as the devotee of a principle and as the victim of a passion. Yet this is what we have done too often, and what we are in danger of continuing to do to our infinite peril and discredit, unless we can make up our mind deliberately, and keep it when once made up.

The two schools of foreign policy we speak of have hitherto been commonly distinguished by the phrases Intervention and Non-intervention. We do not wish to prejudge the discussion we invite by adjectives, or we might qualify them respectively as the Imperial and the Parochial, the Lavish and the Economic, the European and the Insular, the Generous and the Egotistic, the Grandiose and the Self-effacing. But as to the essential characteristics at the root of each, there can be no mistake. Many valid pleas may be urged on behalf of each, which it would be impossible

for fair and wide-seeing antagonists to deny. Many weighty objections to each can be pleaded, the reality and applicability of which no candid reasoner can question or ignore. The duty of statesmen, therefore, and of such political inquirers as wish neither to waste time, nor to obscure truth, nor to abuse mental strength, is frankly to admit, as facts which form the bases and the raw materials of the investigation, both the pleas and the objections, and to confine themselves to the simpler and more profitable task of measuring the one against the other, and assigning the respective force to each. Inevitably the conclusion will be different with discrepant temperaments and in varying moods; but at least all classes of thinkers and feelers in the nation will have a clear conception of the true grounds of their determination and desires, and may be expected to show some resolution and persistence in their course of action. We shall try not to state on either side anything that is open to dispute by well-informed observers, and to state what we do state as briefly and unrhetorically as we can. We have such strong sympathies with both sets of views in their essential features that impartiality at all events will not be difficult.

We need not go back into English history beyond the last century. Previous to that date there was much that was glorious in our national career, and not a few episodes that were disgraceful. Our recent annals—that portion of them at least which is closely linked with the present times—may be said to begin

with that great upsetting of European countries of which the French Revolution was the origin, and in a great measure the cause. The decided and pertinacious part which England took in the wars which arose out of that event, and which lasted nearly five-and-twenty years—a part often no doubt mistaken, sometimes perhaps mischievous, but always influential, often grand and noble, and ultimately successful—covered the nation with glory, endowed her with power, placed her indisputably at the head of European nations, and (what is more to our present purpose) settled in the minds of her own people as well as in the mind of foreign countries that she must thenceforth be not only mixed up with all Continental interests and struggles, but must exercise a potential voice in their decision. For a quarter of a century foreign matters had affected and swayed the policy of the country far beyond any domestic topics of discussion ; and the peace of 1815, which closed that period, found and left our statesmen occupied with those outside matters in an unwholesomely paramount degree. At that time Great Britain had, and could not help having, an "Imperial policy;" and the country would scarcely have respected or even tolerated the Government had it been otherwise. Naturally the position flattered our pride ; it gratified the feelings and fell in with the interests, real or fancied, of the ruling classes to be appealed to by all other countries for support in their disputes ; it dazzled the imagination of the masses ; and it was delightful to the professional zeal and ambition of the two great

Services to feel or to fancy that Great Britain could rule and regulate the world.

A few years passed away, and the reaction came. The old generation, the warriors who had conquered in the fight, the statesmen who had directed the campaigns, and the people who had been sharers and spectators in the exciting struggle, began to die away; politicians and orators of an alien mode of thinking, who had scarcely been listened to (and, we are bound to say, had not always deserved to be listened to) in the heat of strife, came to the front and insisted on a hearing. Blood cooled down; reflection took the place of passion; bills came in for payment, and were enormously, unexpectedly, sometimes almost overpoweringly heavy; trade became dull, and inflated profits sank to a reasonable level; and taxation, not always very judiciously contrived, grew burdensome. In the midst of the growing discontent the new economic doctrines came up for a hearing, and their claim in time became irresistible; while democratic politics, so long discredited, revived and gained strength from year to year. The poverty and suffering of millions of the working classes came in aid of the reactionary party and the more egotistical line of policy. Home interests, which had become imperious home necessities, forced themselves upon attention, and brought their advocates into power. The new ideas of "peace, retrenchment, and reform" got their innings, and amid much struggle, and with a few occasional episodes, have ruled the national policy

from 1830 till 1875. Now, at last, owing to a variety of combined influences which we need not pause to specify, the spirit of the old policy has come uppermost once more, and has much to say for itself, though it says what it does say, in our judgment, much less powerfully, less wisely, and less scrupulously than it might.

The principles and motives to action which dictate and inspire the imperial course are three—love of glory, love of power, and love of usefulness. It may be defended on the ground of right and on the plea of duty. Having a high position among nations, it would seem idle, selfish, and pusillanimous to forego it. Not using it, moreover, would probably enough involve losing it. Inactive strength is usually decaying strength. Talents laid up in a napkin are not only unprofitable talents, but are apt to become rusty talents in the end. Wealth and might employed only for the comfort and security of the owners win neither respect nor regard, and may ultimately fail to obtain either the security or the well-being to which they are too exclusively devoted. Moreover, when a State begins to think more of prosperity than of glory—to dwell rather on the actual than the ideal, on material possessions and material gains, on what it has than on what it is in the estimation of the world—it loses one of the grandest inspirations of human action. Besides this, it is not to be denied that *prestige*, sadly as the phrase is misused, has a distinct meaning of its own. The word may not be English, but the reality that it

expresses is English enough in all conscience. Power, too, is a grand endowment, which it is foolish to despise, and would be wrong to throw away, and cowardly to let slip from us out of indifference. It has been inherited, and ought therefore to be transmitted.

But these, to the more serious natures among us, are only the outskirts of the question. Power, wealth, and wide possessions, confer capacities and opportunities of good which it would be simply criminal to neglect or to forego. The ownership of a vast Empire commands and imposes something Imperial in our policy and our ideas. We may rejoice in and be grateful for the insularity of our position, but we cannot escape from the inherent solidarity of all civilised races. It may be objected that these are dim conceptions and a vague phraseology. Still we are, or flatter ourselves that we are, the representatives, the leaders, the advocates and protectors of the two great interests of Peoples—justice and freedom; and till now we have had a right thus to conceive of ourselves, and thus to pose before the world. We believe that in the main we stand at the head of European civilisation, of which justice and freedom are the first elements and the most essential conditions. We cannot help sympathising with all classes, all races, all nationalities, which aspire to and are struggling for these most indispensable of attainments. Ought we not to manifest this sympathy in action, whenever we can do so wisely and with a prospect of success? Can

we help doing so? Should we not be failing in our duties did we abstain from doing so?

Again, does not this same sense of solidarity and consciousness of duty to our neighbour bind us to protect, where we can, one nation against the aggressions of another—at least and especially where the sufferer is feeble and the aggressor is in the wrong? And practically is not the difference between a "spirited foreign policy" and a weak and dawdling one, in nine cases out of ten, simply the difference between a Minister in whom this sense of solidarity and consciousness of duty is prompt, sensitive, and vigilant, and one in whom it is languid, timid, and undecided?

Lastly, though the insular position of Great Britain might appear to give us a rare and most enviable *potentiality* of abstinence from Continental quarrels and from foreign politics in general, yet this advantage is apparent rather than real, inasmuch as our outlying Empire is the most wide-spread, extensive, and fragmentary in the world. Our Dependencies—which, if attacked, we should *unanimously*, wisely or unwisely, fight to the death to defend, whatever might be the private opinions of some among us as to their profitable or burdensome character—are scattered in the most distant quarters, and are coveted by near neighbours. Our Colonies—whatever be our legal obligations, whatever our occasional *tiffs*, whatever the foolish language and the flighty boasts in which both we and they every now and then indulge—are peopled by our fellow-citizens and bound to us by the closest

ties of interest and affection ; and there can be little doubt that any insult to them, or interference with them, or attack upon them, would be resented just as promptly as if it were offered to the mother-country. So that, in truth, while the best protected, the wealthiest, and probably the most powerful nation in Europe, we are also, looked at as a whole, if not the most vulnerable, at least the most *sensitive*—touchable and assailable at more points than any other. We are the very *octopus* of nations, with feelers out in both hemispheres and in all quarters of the globe. There can scarcely be a serious movement or external action of any State which would not affect us and our possessions more or less directly. We are, therefore, whether we like it or not, bound to the most especial vigilance, and by the strongest obligations. Our policy *must* be Imperial in its character and its range, so long as our possessions constitute us an Empire in extent. Those who wish that policy to be Parochial, and our Government a Vestry, must first restrict our territories to the dimensions of a home estate.

Now, if these three positions are conceded—and it is difficult to see how, thus stated, they can be gainsaid, and certain that Englishmen in the mass and in the abstract will never dispute them—are not the two fundamental doctrines of the advocates of an "Imperial policy" established? And thenceforth is not the controversy between them and their antagonists reduced to questions of detail, and in a great measure even to matters of fact?—to the discussion, *first*, whether the

application of those principles to the particular case in hand is just and sound; *secondly*, whether intervention should be active or merely diplomatic—*i.e.*, whether success is certain enough to make action wise, and whether justice to our own people warrants us in laying fresh burdens upon them for the sake of others; and whether the immediate or remote interests of Great Britain are so involved as to bring fresh elements into our consideration?

In a word, will it not appear that the discrepancy of view between the adherents of the wider and the narrower policy is not a discrepancy of principle, or even of sentiment, at all,—but merely that one party assigns greater weight to one set of considerations, and the other party to another set, or that each are prone to ignore special considerations altogether?[1]

Those who look at the reverse of the shield—the advocates of that line of policy which its enemies characterise as selfish and parochial, and its friends as

[1] This, according to Sir Louis Mallet, in his late lucid and interesting introduction to "Cobden's Political Writings," was the idea of that eminent statesman. "Except as regards intervention in the internal dissensions of other countries, Cobden never, so far as we are aware, advanced or held the opinion that all wars not undertaken for self-defence were always wrong or inexpedient. The question with him was *one of relative duties*. It is clear that the duty and wisdom of entering upon a war, even in the most righteous cause, must be measured by our knowledge and our power; but even where our knowledge is complete and our power sufficient, it is necessary that, in undertaking such a war, we should be satisfied that, in doing so, we are not neglecting and putting it out of our reach to fulfil more sacred and more imperative duties." (Introd. p. xiv.)

sagacious and economic—have many valid pleas to urge on its behalf, and can appeal to many impressive lessons of history. While not denying or meeting in face the doctrines just alleged, they maintain that these are of a nature peculiarly liable to rash, passionate, and indiscriminate application; that the pleas of generous sympathy are constantly put forth to disguise and gild a course of conduct which would be more accurately qualified as impertinent and meddlesome; that "British interests" are habitually put forward where no such interests are endangered or involved, and even where, truly regarded, they would rather dictate abstinence from action; that, under the pretext of Imperialism and farseeing statesmanship, the habitual and hitherto incurable fault of our Governments—especially of Tory Governments—has been to look too far ahead, and to commit the dangerous error of fancying that they can provide for a future which, when it comes, will find circumstances altogether changed and pointing in a quite different direction;—that in fact, far too many of the conceptions of feudalism linger in the minds of our rulers, and that what we dignify by the phrases "national interests," and "courageous and vigilant statesmanship," is, when stripped naked, often but the interests, tastes, ideas, and passions of the "Upper Ten Thousand;" and, finally, that when all is said that can be said, and all conceded that is true, we simply *cannot afford* thus to play the liberal Magnifico; that charity begins at home, that our own people are grievously

overburdened already in consequence of old wars and former interventions, and are suffering from many defects and wrongs in our administrative arrangements and social condition which imperatively demand remedy and redress—evils which fresh interventions would not only largely aggravate, but certainly cause to be again neglected;—that, in a word and to sum up the whole, while not prepared to maintain, and not feeling it at all incumbent on them to maintain, that a "spirited foreign policy" *may* not conceivably and at times be wise and justifiable, they declare their firm conviction that, neither now nor in our fathers' day, have such cases been other than extraordinarily rare.

Almost all these allegations are incontrovertible, and thus and thus only can the position of the Imperialists be effectually assailed and turned. Let us see, therefore, what are the weak points, if any, of the position taken up by the economists, and where and how it needs, or may admit of, modification.

We are not, as is often said but too often forgotten, the "Policemen of the world;" nor can we undertake to be. Our hands are full. We have much more to do than we can do adequately, deliberately, or with the promptitude required. We have thirty-five millions of home citizens, whose affairs are clamouring for attention, whose most important interests and questions—sanitary, social, educational, administrative, industrial, and legal—are constantly pushed into a corner, or transacted in a hurry, or treated with an oblivious negligence which is at once

discreditable and dangerous; for our civilisation has become curiously complicated, and our institutions have not kept up with that complication, and some of the gravest and deepest topics, critical to our welfare as a people, can secure only casual glances in the place of the quiet reflection they demand. The *remanets* of every session are disheartening and alarming to all earnest thinkers, and are increasing year by year.—Our Colonial Empire numbers about ten millions of brethren, whose views, purposes, circumstances, and tastes are as varied as they well can be, are little understood at home either by Englishmen, or English Parliaments, or English statesmen; and who, in consequence of this lack of information and comprehension, are left to follow their own devices—perhaps we ought to say the devices of the least foreseeing and cultivated among them—to a degree which threatens to lay up embarrassing and bitter results for a future which cannot be remote.—Besides all this we have two hundred millions of Indian *subjects* (to say nothing of the fifty millions whose government we have to superintend almost as much as if they were our subjects), presenting in all aspects—law, language, habits, and religion—one of the most difficult and perplexing problems that ever taxed the strength or the wisdom of a politician. The condition of those races, both in their internal and external relations, keeps hundreds of us in a state of unmanly nervousness, and lies upon the better and more conscientious spirits among us with the sense of an almost intolerable

burden,—a task to which our best intelligence and our liveliest vigour are felt to be but barely equal. The claims of these Indians upon us swell and multiply with each year that passes over us, while our revenues, heavy enough in the views of the contributors, are not adequate, and increase in no satisfactory proportion, and offer grounds of growing anxiety. Yet Indian debates are listened to with the most languid attention in Parliament, and can scarcely command a House ; the Indian Budget is relegated to the dregs, the very last week often, of an exhausted session ; while zealous Indian reformers (happily it may be) can scarcely get a hearing. Yet—thus fearfully over-weighted, thus habitually scamping our work,—*having already on our hands and on our conscience, to speak broadly,* 250 *or* 300 *out of the* 1,200 *millions of the human race,*[1]—there are politicians among us (now in power and apparently backed up by the unthinking masses) who are always ready

[1] This is of course a rough estimate, and excludes the savages and the unknown semi-savages of the interior of Africa and Australia, whose numbers can only be guessed out. If we put aside China and Japan, the so-called civilised races do not reach 700 millions, for whom we are responsible for more than *one-third*. The usual calculation is as follows :—

Europe . .	270,000,000	China . .	405,000,000
America .	85,000,000	Japan . .	33,000,000
Africa . .	30,000,000		
Asia . .	290,000,000		488,000,000
Australia .	5,000,000		
	680,000,000		

to add to these obligations, to take up fresh duties and scatter guarantees broadcast. Does this look like conscientious or forecasting statesmanship?

Not one word of these considerations can be controverted, and yet they have been for generations urged in vain. The only arguments that can be urged against them are equally true: it is for our readers to decide whether they are equally weighty. The first is that *our power is the measure of our duty;* we *cannot* suffer the cause of justice or freedom to be crushed if effort on our part can secure its victory, on the plea that our strength is limited and the claims upon it many and imperative. The second is that if we, when called upon, shrink into our shell, shrug our shoulders, muttering in foreign languages the un-English sentiments, "Non possumus," or "Ça ne nous regarde pas," we must expect to be met in a corresponding spirit when our day of trial and emergency shall arrive; and that, if we are cold and deaf to the appeals of others, we may find ourselves in time of need (and such times come even to the most powerful) without a friend or an ally. It is true that friendship or assistance in political cases is little dependent upon either gratitude or admiration, and that we shall be aided only if it be for the interest of other States to range themselves beside us; but will the maintenance of a nation which habitually acts upon the selfish system be an object of concern to any one? England will be sustained if she is *useful;* but to whom will a nation that is systematically isolated and unsympathetic be useful?

Against the argument that "imperial" statesmanship is peculiarly prone to the error of looking too far ahead, and spending vast resources of every kind in providing against perils that it is easy to *fancy*, but nearly impossible really to *foresee*, we do not believe that any valid counterbalancing arguments can be set up. We are living in a peculiarly fermenting epoch, the like of which has not been seen since the first French Revolution, and the fermentation, if not so violent as then, is perhaps even deeper and more widely spread. The whole civilised world, in both the eastern and the western hemispheres, is seething with excitement and pregnant with unpredicted possibilities of change; and the changes may not improbably affect the social yet more than the political relations of nations, governments, and classes. Whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain—that the circumstances which the statesman of the next generation will have to work under will not be those of the generation now alive; the problems he will have to solve will be of a different order; the dangers he will have to guard against will be of a different order, and may menace him from unexpected quarters; he will probably have to seek a new set of allies, and very likely to aim at a new set of objects. To toil, and spend, and slay, and die in the last quarter of the nineteenth century on behalf of a course of action which may defeat, delay, and counteract the aims for which the first quarter of the twentieth century will be passionately eager, would

appear to be a policy elaborately costly and unwise. In such times, surely, the dictates of true sagacity and prevision would counsel us to abstain from unnecessary obligations; to decline all engagements and guarantees which bind us in an unconjecturable future; to keep our strength well in hand, our "bankers' balance" ample, unexhausted, and in readiness; and our national will as free as possible for every conceivable emergency;—in a word, to pursue the policy of "masterly inaction,"—taking care above all things to entrench ourselves in such a position that no nation, however powerful or however ambitious, shall dream of meddling with us, and to be so beneficently peaceful, that none, however cantankerous, shall desire to harass or to weaken us.

The favourite and most ordinary plea of the economic school we think it would do well not to press too far or apply too indiscriminately. There is much truth in it, and it is often undeniably appropriate and decisive. In the days when Mr Cobden used it with such efficacy, it was incomparably truer than it is now. Since that time the earnings of the masses have greatly increased, as well as the supply of articles consumed by them, while the taxation levied on them has been steadily reduced. Still our burdens are unquestionably heavy, and our indebtedness unquestionably great. It is undeniable, moreover, that of the eight hundred millions of our national debt and the twenty-five millions of our consequent yearly taxation, a large proportion was

incurred in unwise and needless wars—a large proportion also was due to the reckless and clumsy mode in which those wars were carried on. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that in the Napoleonic wars which occupied the first fifteen years of the century, the part played by this country was a righteous and a serviceable part, and well worth what it cost us; and we fancy the Whigs have long since regretted the course they took in opposition. It is undeniable, moreover, that we are far less heavily burdened than our fathers and our grandfathers, and that our burdens are both more equitably and more judiciously apportioned than were theirs,[1] that our shoulders are much broader, and our wealth much greater. We are still able to do whatever we ought to do, and whatever it is our interest to do; and we cannot admit that the poverty of Great Britain can ever be pleaded with either dignity or truth as a reason against any policy which is dictated by wisdom or justice. The economists, however, take up an unassailable position when they

[1] We do not wish to burden our pages with figures. Calculations bearing out these statements were given in a paper called "The Right Use of a Surplus," which appeared three or four years since in the *Contemporary Review*. It was there shown that in the last quarter of a century the assessable income of the nation had nearly doubled, while its taxation had increased only 20 per cent.; that the wages of the labouring classes had risen about 25 per cent., and the consumption of most imported and excisable articles in the same proportion or a greater; and that the classes who possess property, as compared with the working classes, pay in taxes *six* times as much per head, and nearly *twice* as much in proportion to income. The consumption per head of imported articles of *solid food* was 18s. in 1858. In 1877 it was 59s. 6d.

urge upon meddlesome or inconsiderate rulers that war, or any action which holds war over us as a probability, not only cramps trade, curtails demand, checks production, and unavoidably reduces the earnings and the comforts of the industrial classes, whether employers or employed, but must add seriously if not alarmingly to unprofitable government expenditure, while at the same time diminishing the resources out of which the taxation to meet that expenditure has to be drawn. The surest—indeed the only sure—result of a meddling and dictatorial, a warlike, or a "spirited" foreign policy (usually but a gilded and softened phrase for the same thing), is, no one can deny, disturbance and distress to nearly all classes, to the poorest in particular; and something more than mere distress to those who habitually live up to their income—that is to four-fifths of the community. The economists, therefore, are indisputably right in insisting upon our rulers pondering this consideration with a solemnity and in a temper which is too rare among them. And they are right, moreover, and simply within the limits of imperative duty, when they remind hasty politicians that there is yet a further element in the question to be weighed—which is, not only whether the cause of war be righteous and its purpose valuable, not only whether its issue, if successful, would be beneficent to other lands, and its undertaking, therefore, warrantable in the abstract — but whether its cost be not far greater than it would be just to lay upon our own people. Duties are relative, and our own citizens are entitled to our first considera-

tion. If it may be questioned whether a British Government has a right to harass and impoverish millions in Lancashire and Yorkshire to feed the starving denizens of Northern China, the same doubt may be felt when the sufferers are the semi-barbarians of Bulgaria or Asia Minor.

One representation of the same school of politicians is irrefragable and significant. It cannot be denied that both the aristocrats and the upper ten thousand generally have interests, objects, and associations which incline them with portentous force to become the supporters of that spirited foreign policy which is so apt to drift into a warlike one. Nor is this tendency by any means confined exclusively to one party in the State; though the Whigs, as leaning mainly on the middle and commercial classes for support, have a strong counterbalancing influence to keep them right. The pressure of the entire military and naval services —with a few creditable exceptions among the older and more experienced generals and admirals, who know what war means, and can recollect and realise its horrors—acts in the same direction. The prospect of a campaign—a "brush," as they term it, with any one—sends a thrill of pleasurable excitement through every soldier and sailor in the country, and most of all through the bosoms of young officers, and largely of their connections also. It is inevitable that it should be so. It is no discredit to them that it is so. Peace to them means a dull and monotonous career, stagnant promotion, and a grey and rusty life during their most eager years. War

means activity, progress, the satisfaction of that thirst for distinction which burns in the breast of all who are worth their salt. The idle classes,—especially numerous among the wealthy and noble, those influential and affluent circles who abound in younger sons pining for a career of some sort, yet despising trade, averse to emigration, unfit for the intellectual professions, who cannot dig, would be ashamed to beg, but are ready enough to fight, and while young rather like the fun of it,—constitute a powerful phalanx ever urgent in one direction;—a phalanx, too, with terribly close connections with both Houses of Parliament, and with every Cabinet that ever holds the reins of power. Without endorsing the brief and graphic language of Mr Bright, who described the Services as "a gigantic system of outdoor relief for members of the aristocracy," we must all admit that they do create a ceaselessly operative pressure in a dangerous direction—a pressure, too, which augments with the swelling wealth of England and the unequal distribution of that wealth. Every minister knows and feels this; every conscientious minister will be anxiously on his guard to withstand its operation.

But there is yet another clause which must of late years be added to this indictment; a grave aggravation of the danger thus signalised—an aggravation, moreover, for which the Liberal party are mainly responsible, and to which they have remained curiously and resolutely blind. We are not now blaming the course of action which has culminated in this result—that

would lead us into too wide a field of controversy—we only say that the result lies at their door, and they must endure it as they best may, or counteract it, if by chance they can. The case is plain the moment it is stated, and it may be stated in the briefest words. For the last thirty or forty years the most urgent efforts of the Liberals, and especially the Liberals of the pacific and economic schools, have been directed towards relieving the industrial classes of the country, manufacturing and agricultural alike, from the pressure of taxation. They have toiled for this object in a great measure at the dictate of benevolence and justice, as well as from sound economic doctrines. They have continued this action from year to year with single-minded and unremitting zeal, so that at last they may be said to have indoctrinated their antagonists. They have succeeded so completely that they have relieved the classes in question from nearly all taxation, except that raised from drinking and smoking, of which they still pay a large share. The people are now taxed almost solely for indulgences which they can dispense with when they please, the chief portion of which is deleterious, and which their most earnest friends are indefatigably labouring to induce them to forego.[1]

[1] In 1877 the total revenue levied on these articles was as follows :—

Tobacco and Snuff, ...	£7,775,000
Spirits (Customs), ...	5,770,000
Spirits (Excise), ...	14,873,000
Malt, ...	8,040,000
	£36,458,000

It can scarcely be doubted that at least one-third of this amount represents *excessive* indulgence.

From all indirect taxes, except those on malt, spirits, and tobacco, and a trifle still on tea, they have been freed; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it seems, has yet to be born who will have skill to devise, or equity and courage to impose, a direct tax upon the masses. When these are as sober and sensible as we hope to see them, and are striving to make them, upwards of twenty-five millions of our present revenue will lapse, will have to be made good,—and who believes that it will be made good by a poll-tax?

But while this operation has been going on amid general plaudits from both sides of the House, and from nearly all financiers, whatever their political opinions, another operation has been going on *pari passu*, and with almost as promiscuous applause.

We have given household suffrage to the borough population; we are about to extend it to the county population; and when this wholesale enfranchisement is complete we shall have made those classes who live on weekly wages, as distinguished from those who live on incomes derived from property, commerce, or professions, *potentially* masters of elections because the majority of the electorate. Those classes—with all their excellencies, with all their capabilities of good—are yet undeniably the least informed, the least competent to anticipate the future, the most excitable, and probably also, with the exception of the upper ten thousand, the most likely, under excitement, to give their votes for war.

Ultimately, no doubt, this section of the community would be the greatest sufferers by the consequences of that "spirited foreign policy" for which they might at first be the loudest clamourers; but, *to begin with*, the higher classes might find their surest supporters in the lowest classes, whom we have thoughtlessly relieved from the sensible pressure of those fiscal burdens which could once be calculated upon for restraining them from so suicidal an alliance.

To conclude. One of the weightiest reasons for that habitual abstinence from intervention in foreign quarrels which Cobden used to preach so earnestly, may be found in our prevalent and almost inevitable ignorance. It is impossible that we should know thoroughly, comprehensively, and to the bottom, the rights of disputes between distant nations. It is perhaps as difficult for us to be competent to judge between contending sections in distant communities. Our blood may boil at hearing of atrocities committed, without being able to ascertain how those atrocities were provoked, or how they may have been retaliated. We cannot help sympathising with sufferers, and we seldom pause to reflect that the suffering cause is not always, nor exclusively, the righteous cause. Still more, we may see clearly that great wrong is being done, but be entirely in the dark as to how to set it right, and be very liable to do mischief where our sole aim is to do good, and prone to aggravate by our misconceived intervention the very evils we are thirsting to rectify. We rarely, moreover, remember

that all of us—people as well as Governments, Her Majesty's Opposition just as much as Her Majesty's Ministers—are apt, almost unavoidably apt, to derive our information from special sources, often tainted or partial sources, from correspondents of our own tone of thought and feeling, from irritated travellers or residents who are not careful to be accurate in their reports. We can seldom know a case *all round*—its antecedents, its bearings, its surroundings, its probable consequences. We are even now, with all our new and extensive avenues of information, at the mercy of the newspaper or the two or three newspapers we read, just as those journals are dependent on the tone, the leanings, and the talents of the special correspondent they send out, just as ministers depend upon the specialities of their consuls and ambassadors. We have surely had warnings enough to this effect of late. If it were not so, how could we account for the astounding discrepancy of views and sympathies which has severed Englishmen so widely during the last two years—a discrepancy which has so harassed and disturbed our domestic peace?[1] Two years ago, passions here were so excited that we were almost on the eve of going to war; and perhaps were only saved from such calamity and sin by the fact that *the nation* did not know which side to take—nay, has not even yet made up its mind *as a whole* whether to sympathise with Turkey or her conquerors. War is a tre-

[1] The same lesson might be gathered from the memory of the American Civil War.

mendous thing—surely a thing that only the most absolute and complete knowledge of our premisses can justify.

So much for the general principles bearing on this mighty controversy. We may be allowed a few closing words on their application to the case immediately before us, which may guide us to a decision as to which set of views and tendencies appears safest and wisest. Seldom has a nation been so torn between the two. We have just escaped being dragged into war. We have not escaped being dragged into intervention of the most active and portentous kind. Our two most notable, and, for the time, most popular ministers have taken the lead, and, in defiance of the protests of the most eloquent and enthusiastic opposition, have been backed in their proceedings by a large majority, and rewarded by the most clamorous applause of the masses, and by the most signal honours that Royalty could bestow. We may say, therefore—indeed we cannot help saying—that what they have done England has done—has not condoned, but approved and sanctioned. In this great Areopagus of States, then, England, a year ago the great upholder of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire, has sanctioned and shared in its partition ; has handed over two reluctant provinces to Austria ; two fortresses, a coveted port, and some trifling territory to Russia, clearly against the wish of the Porte and the indignant and armed protest of the inhabitants ; and has agreed to the entire independence and severance of the

rebellious country out of whose ill-treatment the war arose. She has prevented that country from being large and strong enough to stand by her own strength, as she certainly has not wisdom for self-government, and has thus secured her autonomy being little more than nominal, and probably far from beneficial. She has at the same time succeeded in dragging back another province, Eastern Roumelia, under the partial control of Turkey, and has claimed praise for doing so. She has committed the grave error of *doing nothing* for the only very hopeful race in South-Eastern Europe, whom she had encouraged to *expect much*—to say no more. Finally, she has induced the Porte to hand over to her an unhealthy island on the Syrian coast—having been prepared to seize it if the Sultan had ventured to refuse its peaceable surrender. As an offset to these curious proceedings, after sanctioning and aiding the Congress in despoiling Turkey of nearly the whole of her European territories, distinctly and almost avowedly because she was unable to retain them and utterly unfit to govern them, she undertakes single-handed the protection and maintenance of the enormous range of countries known as Turkey in Asia; and this ostensibly not in the least in the interests of her *protégé*, but simply because the maintenance of this Empire, notoriously the most scandalously and hopelessly incapable and cruel among nations called civilised, is thought necessary as a bulwark *for British India* against possible attack from Russia—an attack which,

in the opinion of nearly every competent statesman,[1] will come, if it ever comes, from an entirely different quarter, and need not be at all dreaded even then ;—thus encountering a probable, proximate, most disadvantageous, and most costly conflict with a powerful adversary on the plea of warding off a distant and unreal danger ;—and doing this by guaranteeing and supporting a rule so incurably and admittedly bad that to keep one acre of God's earth or one tribe of God's creatures under its sway one unnecessary year is a crime with few parallels. It is true there is *talk* of inducing and instructing the Porte to govern better, to alter her nature and amend her ways, though few know better than British Ministers that, if this intention be serious, it can only be realised by superseding the Sultan and his Pashas, and governing Asia Minor as we govern India—in a word, *taking possession* of Anatolia and Mesopotamia as well as Cyprus, and probably having to fight the Porte instead of defending it. Do they contemplate such a scheme ? Dare they undertake it ? How long would Great Britain sanction it, or provide them with funds for carrying it out ? If, on the contrary, it is a sham, not a serious inten-

[1] Forty years ago Lord Hardinge declared that an invasion of India by Russia was only possible by one route, that of Herat and Affghanistan, and that the obstacles to this route are so great that practically it may be set down as a "political nightmare." The Duke of Wellington endorsed this dictum. Lord Northbrook said the same thing six weeks ago in the House of Lords,—adding, "I am supported in my views by the most experienced of Indian administrators—by Lord Canning, Lord Mayo, and Lord Lawrence."

tion, but mere clouds of dust thrown in our eyes, then. few such deceptions have ever been practised on a bewildered and confiding nation.

Could the opponents of an Imperial policy by possibility point to a complication of occurrences so aptly illustrative of every objection they have set forth ?

III.

THE ECHO OF THE ANTIPODES.[1]

FAS *est et ab hoste doceri.* Still more permissible and appropriate must it be to profit by the experience of our children, because still closer must be the analogy between the characters and the circumstances of those so nearly allied by blood, and probably identical in so many of their antecedents. I cannot but believe, therefore, that much interest will attach to the following contribution to some of our most imminent political and social problems, which reached me a few days ago, from one of a group of colonies which, no doubt, is destined to a future of great prosperity and power. The writer holds a position of eminence and wealth in New South Wales, has made his home in that colony, intends to live and die there, is a man of influence among his fellow-citizens, and much concerned with commercial and industrial undertakings, and, consequently, well qualified to give us reliable information on the subject in question.

"SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES,
10*th March*, 1875.

"DEAR SIR,—If I venture to intrude myself upon you in this letter, it is that, having perused with great interest your latest

[1] *Contemporary Review*, July 1875.

work, 'Rocks Ahead,' I considered that it might be gratifying to you to hear 'A Voice from the Antipodes' echo by an example the truth of your vaticinations. We have in New South Wales an Anglo-Saxon community, with all its energy and doggedness, with all its virtues and its prejudices; and, as far as we can judge from its wealth, its population, and its influence upon the markets of the world, one that, though still a colony, has placed its foot upon the first round of the ladder of nationality; and it is a worthy study for the philosopher to see how that nationality is shaping its future. In the year 1853 a constitution was granted to the colony, creating two Houses of Parliament—the Senate, or Upper House, nominated by the Crown, and an Assembly elected by the people. As the result of continual amendment, the qualification for election to the Assembly, being only a six months' residence in the electorate, becomes almost universal suffrage—more particularly as the franchise attaches to lodgers as well as householders. Inasmuch as the proposal that the University should return a member has been always rejected, it is fair to assume that the numerical majority have no desire that education (simply as education) should have a voice in their councils. The members of the Assembly are not chosen on account of their pre-eminent talent, or commanding wealth, or individual worth, but entirely from personal influence, or their expressed accordance with the popular cry of the day. But it would be vain for any one, however talented, influential, or wealthy, to seek to obtain a seat in the Assembly, unless he bowed down before the Juggernaut of the sovereign people, and avowed his sympathy with the 'working man;' and yet, properly so called, the working man does not exist in New South Wales. The hours of labour are but eight, and wages vary according to the skill employed, from 1s. to 2s. (occasionally 2s. 6d.) per hour. These extreme rates, in a country where bread is plentiful and cheap, meat only 4d. per lb., and clothing not dearer than in Europe, are maintained by the efforts of powerful trades-unions, with the knowledge that Parliament dare not propose any scheme of immigration, the effect of which would be to bring competition to the colony and reduce the rate of labour. It must not be imagined that the climate will not permit of more than eight hours' daily labour, for most men work on their own account after hours, and will occasionally deign to do so for their employers, under the temptation of

extra pay. Land in the suburbs being cheap, a very large proportion of the labouring classes are their own landlords, and many, by the aid of building societies, have erected neat and pretty cottages, surrounded by well-cultivated gardens. Of course a large proportion of the amount received for wages is handed over to the union, and I will venture to quote a few examples as indicative of the despotic power these associations exercise :—The owner of one of our coasting steamers will not employ men who are members of the union, and very recently when the steamer arrived into port she commenced discharging cargo at a wharf where union men were employed ; very shortly after, the secretary of the union went to the wharf, and forbade the men on shore to receive cargo from the vessel. Again, the steamer *Rapide* being under repairs, the captain observed that one of the men employed was an habitual idler, and one day on finishing his work desired him not to return : the following morning all the rest of the men were absent, and intimated their intention of not returning until their fellow-unionist was taken on again. In the iron trade, the men, after compelling the eight hours' concession upon their employers (without diminution in the rate of wages), determined that the eight hours should be broken, one for breakfast and one for dinner, instead of having only one break as formerly. The masters being aware that the continual blowing off furnaces would entail a certain loss, declined to concede, and all the works were closed ; the strike lasted about three months, and was friendly arranged by an agreement that, during six months in the year the men should have only one break in the day, and two breaks in the day during the other six months. Some time since the coal miners struck work, and the strike, it was arranged by the delegates of the union, should be terminated by all the collieries in the country (irrespective of the greater or less facilities of any one colliery) agreeing to charge the public an uniform price of 14s. per ton for screened coal, of which 5s. per ton should be paid to the coal-getter, his wages rising or falling 3d. per ton as the price of coal to the public varied by a shilling a ton. I might multiply instances innumerable to show that in the capital, where the unions exist in greatest force, all real power is in their hands, and at the last general election they returned one of their body to Parliament, and who sits as their paid delegate. It is not then extraordinary that in constituencies thus constituted, the

educated classes should as a rule (though there are many worthy exceptions) hold themselves aloof from the political arena. The result is exactly what you have predicted, that there is no party but merely a struggle between the Ins and Outs as to who shall enjoy power, and the parliamentary loaves and fishes, both sides rivals in personal abuse, but both following exactly the same policy. The State is certainly doing its utmost to place within the reach of all the advantages of education, but in consequence of religious dissensions that education is of a very elementary character, for the study of history and all cognate subjects upon which differences of opinion exist is prohibited. It is quite absurd, therefore, to consider that the colony is educating the rising generation up to the extent of its political power, for it is left in the most complete ignorance of all economic questions, which are not even attended to in the addresses of the candidates for legislative honours, for the best of all reasons, that but few understand them. As might be expected, the Assembly are exceedingly impatient at the control of the Upper House as a co-ordinate branch of the legislature; and when a measure has been rejected by the voice of the Senate, often resort to popular clamour to compel the Upper House to give way; but the innate vigour in the life of the young colony is such that it continues to advance and prosper, not aided by, but in spite of its despotic democracy. All contractors and heads of departments acknowledge that there is ample work at the present moment for at least eight thousand able-bodied men, which means an immigration of about thirty thousand souls; but notwithstanding the urgent requirements of the colony, not one member of the Assembly can be found to raise his voice in favour of immigration. The colony exports over a million tons of coal, the supply of which, appears to be absolutely inexhaustible, the best hematite iron ore, lime and clay are found in close proximity to some of the pits; copper and tin ores abound, capital is abundant, but the capitalist is afraid of investing in manufacturing industries, as he would be completely at the mercy of the men in his employ. To give an example: a shipbuilder has now a vessel on the stocks, and was offered a very handsome price for it if he would engage to complete it by a fixed date. The shipbuilder knew that the work could and would be done by the date required, but dared not make the contract, feeling sure that if it came by any chance to the ears

of the union they would take advantage of the circumstance to raise the rate of wages upon him. I believe that what I have written will be quite sufficient, without further occupying your valuable time, to show that you have certainly not exaggerated your prognostications of England's future."

The above communication needs no commentary, but I may perhaps be allowed to supplement it by a reference to one or two events which have occurred since the publication of the first edition of "Rocks Ahead," which, if I am not mistaken, are gradually leading thoughtful minds to believe that there may be more sober truth and less flighty fancy in the gloomy prognostics of that volume than most of its readers were originally inclined to admit.

In a note at p. 80, I ventured to predict that "the year 1874 bade fair to be a year of conflict and of strikes, which would waste a vast amount of capital and of earnings, teach us many lessons, and clinch many of the arguments of this paper." Whether it has taught us many lessons may be questioned, but assuredly it has done everything else that was anticipated from it. It has been pre-eminently a year of strikes, and of hopeless, gigantic, and wasteful ones, in this country; and in others also, so differently situated as, one might have fancied, to have been exempted from our troubles. The Sydney letter just quoted shows us the operation of trades unions—just as selfish, just as cruel, just as anti-social, short-sighted, and suicidal, in a new country lacking labour, cramped and kept back for want of labour, and where labour in consequence can, in a great measure, com-

mand its own terms—as in an old country like England, where labour is, or is alleged to be, redundant, and therefore the *soi-disant* "slave of capital." America has been suffering from strikes so menacing and so prolonged that the troops, even in that land of democracy, have been called out to repress disturbances. The Philadelphia correspondent of one of the New York journals writes: —[1]

"Scarcely any other topic has been prevalent in business circles during the past week than the all-absorbing one of the coal strike, the situation at the mines, the departure of troops from this and other points to the scene of trouble, and the conflicting rumours constantly received by wire as to the actual condition of affairs. Probably at no period since the war has there been so gravely serious a position of affairs in our country as that now existing between the various labour unions and the industries with which they are connected. Here we have the largest manufacturing city in the world, with positively no more than three weeks' supply of coal on hand, even for household uses. From the interior the most reliable information exists that few if any of the furnaces and other ironworks have any fuel, even for present uses, while their previous production has been seriously interfered with. It is estimated that not less than one hundred thousand persons, and even *five hundred millions of capital*, in this commonwealth alone, are to-day producing nothing. At the ordinary price of skilled labour, 2 dollars per day, this number of persons unemployed represents a daily loss of 200,000 dollars, a loss which no community can stand. The additional loss to capital by injury and deterioration of idle machinery, and loss of interest, will swell the aggregate damage to one of frightful proportions, and one which must soon be sensibly felt by the general public. The settlement of the labour

[1] Other papers add the calculation that the value of the capital lying idle in Pennsylvania is about five hundred millions of dollars, and the loss of interest not less than 75,000 dollars per day.

troubles of the country is now the subject which should and must engage the earnest attention of all classes of citizens, or we are inevitably drifting into a condition of anarchy and lawlessness, which will be followed by a more serious financial panic than that from which we had hoped we were recovering. There are grave wrongs on both sides to be settled, and nothing seems more likely to secure any permanent relief than a well-digested plan of arbitration in all labour disputes, which shall be compulsory on both parties. The latest reports as to the coal strike indicate a possibility of a settlement, but in other branches—among ironworkers, weavers, glass-blowers, and the very numerous tradesmen on strike—there seems no greater prospect of improvement than a month since. To the capitalist and manufacturer the situation is, therefore, one of extreme concern, and through them reflected on the entire business community."

Lastly (to pass over several struggles of a similar character, but of slighter dimensions, which have taken place in Belgium, Germany, and France), the great South Wales conflict in the iron and coal trade, which has absorbed so much public attention this spring, has presented features unusually disheartening. We have no desire to enter upon any points which might excite or renew controversy or painful feeling, or to express opinions on subjects on which, perhaps, only those on the spot, and who have followed the subject in all its details and antecedents, are qualified to pronounce. The lock-out may have been an injudicious and possibly an unwarrantable step; more patience might have been shown at the outset, and fuller information might have been vouchsafed even to unreasonable men; the conduct of the union leaders may have been less condemnable than appears. But three or four features stand out, and have stood out, undisputed

from the outset. It was obvious to all qualified outside observers from the first that the men had no case and no chance of success; the essential facts were patent to the whole world; it is difficult to believe that the colliers or their leaders really disbelieved the statements of the masters as to prices and profits; the subject was one on which (if on any) the working men were especially qualified to judge; not a single organ of the independent press failed to point out the mistake of the colliers, and to prove that they were hopelessly in the wrong. Yet all this was of no avail. The struggle was one of singular obstinacy. Numbers wished to return to work on the offered terms; but whenever a meeting was held to pass a resolution and to open negotations to this effect, the windy oratory of some voluble speaker re-fanned the flame, re-awakened the flagging passions, and overpowered the awakening good sense of the auditors, and the meeting ended by determining to return to another period of distress and idleness. This went on week after week, in spite of the efforts of Lord Aberdare, Mr Brassey, and other tried friends of the colliers, to guide them to a wiser sense of their own interests, and a truer view of facts—every week sacrificing £90,000 to the workers, and incalculable sums to their employers, plunging the labourers deeper and deeper into suffering and debt; and it was not till the retail traders could no longer give credit; till the masters had been forced to announce that any return to work must be at 15 per cent., and not at 10 per cent. reduction, that the conflict was given up, and

then only gradually, slowly, and partially. From the first there was no aid (or none worth speaking of) from union funds, given or promised; from the first there was no hope of victory; from the first the workmen could quote no facts or calculations to afford even a colourable justification of their proceedings; from the first there was the experience of two years ago to warn and to instruct them; yet from first to last did every public meeting held allow itself to be turned aside from the obviously wise and inevitable course, by exhortations addressed solely to the feelings. The millions wasted constitute the least sad feature of this sad history;[1] the only bright feature is the singu-

[1] The conflict lasted nearly twenty-two weeks, and the number of miners, &c., directly out of work was upwards of 58,000, besides many more, probably 12,000, employed in subsidiary labour—in all 70,000. We have now lying before us more than one careful calculation of the loss of earnings to the men, and of interest on capital to the masters resulting from this disastrous contest. The following, from the *Merthyr Express*, includes all collateral losses, and may perhaps be regarded as extreme if not extravagant:—

Coalowners in sale of coal, . . .	£2,100,000
Ironmasters in iron and steel, . . .	2,150,000
Railway companies, ...	264,000
Waggon hire, ...	100,000
Royalties, ...	150,000
Dock dues, ...	100,000
Maintenance of pits, plant, horses, &c., .	250,000
Local trade, ...	1,000,000
Workmen's wages, direct, . . .	3,000,000
Relief administered by Guardians, . .	25,000
Total, ...	£9,139,000

Lord Aberdare, in a letter to the *South Wales Daily News*,

larly orderly and peaceful behaviour of the workmen out of employ—behaviour so different from what it has often been elsewhere, and from what it used to be in similar circumstances in former years. But for those who hoped that the labouring and well-paid poor—the masses of the new constituencies—would prove in real emergencies their fitness to exercise the franchise, to recognize their true friends, to manifest the courage of individuality, and to withstand the misrepresentations of fluent declaimers—the lessons of the conflict just ended have been dispiriting indeed.

We see nothing in all this wherewith to reproach the Welsh miners, no reasonable matter for surprise. Reproach should be reserved for the stump orators and union leaders who so successfully excited and misled them; surprise, and perhaps some specific condemnation, for the politicians, of whatever party, who, in 1867 and afterwards, so resolutely maintained that working men everywhere were now far too sober-minded and enlightened to be excited by stump oratory, or led astray by fallacious misrepresentations, and were capable of standing firm to their own knowledge and judgment against the swaying sympathy of surrounding and shouting numbers. Partisans now are heard to express surprise and dismay at the results

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shows that the loss of wages to the men must have reached £3,000,000. The loss to capitalists is, he says, incalculable.

The ordinary estimate to all parties is £5,000,000, and this will probably be found not far from the truth.

of the late elections at Stoke, Stafford, Merthyr, Stroud, and other boroughs, who were among the foremost to insist a very few years ago upon quadrupling or sextupling their constituencies. Blind guides! to affect amazement at the first fruits of their own work! In what country, I would ask, would an uneducated and unprepared class, thus suddenly invested with potentially supreme power, have acted with so much discretion, or wrought so little mischief? Let us look a little in detail at what *was* done by the Act of 1867. In nearly every one of the boroughs whose elections have caused disappointment and anxiety to the nation the constituency was not *enlarged*, but wholly changed. The former electors included (to speak broadly) the whole of the educated classes:—the great mass of the new electors must therefore have consisted of the wholly or comparatively uneducated classes. *Yet the new ones are four or five to one of the old.* That is, the electoral supremacy was virtually wrested from the men of trained political intelligence, and given over, by a vast preponderance, into the hands (to express the fact as guardedly as possible) of men who had not had any such intelligent training. To say that the borough electors of England and Wales were suddenly raised from 514,000 in 1866 to 1,452,000 in 1875 (or nearly 200 per cent.), is only a most inadequate and disguising statement of the case, for that only says that every elector had two fresh ones placed on the register to countervail his vote. We must look at individual instances, where the work-

ing classes are strongest and most concentrated; and here often the new out-number, eclipse, and neutralize the old *in the proportion of five, six, sometimes eight and nine to one.* We append a table giving the proportions in which the electors have been multiplied by what my readers will, I think, now admit, I had a right to call "the revolution" of 1867.

RATE AT WHICH THE ELECTORS HAD INCREASED BETWEEN 1866 AND 1875.

Under 50 per cent. in 5 Boroughs.	50 and under 100 per cent. in 38 Boroughs.	100 and under 300 per cent. in 107 Boroughs.	300 and under 500 per cent. in 22 Boroughs.	500 per cent. and above in 14 Boroughs.

To those who look at the matter from a purely party point of view, it may be a sufficient sedative with alarmist temperaments to reply, that, of two Parliaments elected under household franchise, one returned a large Liberal and the next a large Conservative majority. To others, whose uneasiness lies in the direction of diminished reverence for property, it is enough to remark that probably no Parliament ever contained so many plutocrats as that of 1875. But we may explain our meaning without personality (except, perhaps, one which will be with most people its own excuse) by reference to a few special returns. The constituency of *Merthyr Tydvil* sprung up from 1387 to 15,866, or about *twelve-fold*, and Merthyr returned Mr Richards, an eminently respectable Non conformist minister, in the place of Mr Bruce, an

eminent and experienced statesman and Cabinet minister. *Morpeth* increased its constituency from 485 to 5,559 or upwards of *eleven-fold*, and has exchanged another Home Secretary, veteran and popular, for a working-men's candidate, thoroughly respectable and trustworthy, we believe, but as yet untrained. *Wolverhampton*, indeed, has *quintupled* its number of electors, but retains its old representatives, and so in the main has *Wigan*. But poor *Stroud*, with more than a *four-fold* augmentation of the electorate, is so disorganised, that, since the lamented Mr Winterbotham's death, it has never been able to get a representative at all. While, to crown the list, *Stoke-upon-Trent*, on the retirement of Mr Melly (a member of sufficiently advanced political opinions), has replaced him by Dr Kenealy, who was certainly not elected on account of any political opinions at all. But then the Stoke which Mr Melly represented had 3,500 electors, while the Stoke which is contented to be represented by Dr Kenealy has 19,500—and, therefore, in no rational sense can the two electorates be said to be the same. It may very well be that the whole of the 6,110 who voted for Kenealy may have been made by Mr Disraeli's Reform Act.

Now, what does Dr Kenealy's return indicate and prove? Circumstances in this case happily enable us to speak with perfect plainness, and at the same time without offence. EITHER the electors of Stoke (by no means a peculiarly uneducated or unintelligent set; perhaps rather the reverse) really believed the Claim-

ant to be Tichborne, and his advocate the gallant defender of an oppressed man—that is, they were convinced of the truth of a position which two Courts of Justice, after investigations of unequalled searchingness and duration, had pronounced to be unquestionably false — a pronouncement which the House of Commons confirmed with a unanimity quite unparalleled, for the only dissentients were Dr Kenealy and his seconder—a conclusion which, after the summing up of the Lord Chief Justice, it seems impossible for rational minds to withstand. In this case it is not too much to assume that men who believe such a position are not unlikely to believe anything in spite of any evidence and any arguments; their intelligence and fitness for the franchise must be far below the level which their friends have hitherto maintained. OR, as no doubt was the case with many, they supposed, with the rest of us, that the Claimant was Orton; but his defender was popular just because his cause was bad—because, in fact, here was a daring lawyer who had stood up against the world for a butcher against a baronet—in short, Dr Kenealy's election was the result of a class feeling of the very worst sort. OR, the real pervading impression assigned by *Punch* to the mass was the correct one, however dim and self-contradictory:—"I don't care whether he was Tichborne, or Castro, or Orton, or who he was; but I don't like to see a poor man kept out of his rights." OR, finally, and with too many, the motive impulse of their vote was simply that they had found

a man (not himself of too spotless antecedents) with audacity and pluck to assail, on behalf of one of their own order, judges, juries, gentlemen, nobles, hostile witnesses, an outvoting Parliament—any one, in short, however high in reverence and station—in a foul-mouthed fashion, which almost sanctioned or threw into the shade their own too customary language. In a word, the popularity and success of Dr Kenealy at Stoke, whether regarded as the product of deficient intelligence or distorted sentiment, are almost equally of evil omen; for there is not the faintest reason for supposing the Stoke constituency to be an exceptional one, or that any large borough might not do as Stoke has done;—and if we are right in this assumption, then we have no security whatever that on any question—class, personal, religious, international, or other—the vast majority of the constituency may not, swayed by a coarse species of oratory, arrive at decisions utterly at variance with evidence, sound sense, wise policy, and the national interest, or even safety. There is no reason in the world why half a dozen topics (more naturally stimulating than the Tichborne case) might not, under the management of a skilful declaimer (and there are scores far abler than Dr Kenealy), get extraordinary hold upon the popular mind, be selected as the crucial question at elections, sweep over the length and breadth of the land, and throw all others into the background. Nor, obviously, if we are to judge by Stoke, is there any reason why, on each one of these, the great body of the working-

classes—the new electorate—should not be misled into a decision as absurd as the one just sent us as a warning. Nor, in the last place, is there the slightest doubt that if they should be so misled, they will be able to place the representative of their delusion at the head of the poll.

It appears to me that not one of these positions can be gainsaid or weakened, and that, as a whole, they are full of evil omen. In 1867 you placed in the hands of the uneducated masses the power of returning whatever members of Parliament they please: in 1875 they showed you that, under excitement, not of the fiercest or grandest order even, they may exercise that power in a fashion that seemed incredible to all men of intelligence—may endorse enthusiastically a monstrous delusion which no subsequent delusion can surpass or even match. It will be said, "This was a purely accidental and abnormal phrenzy: the artisans are not as a rule given to such aberrations; look how few candidates of their own class they returned." True, I reply, they do not and will not usually go so far astray, and they have not very great trust in their own leaders; but grant that a man arises among them with character to gain their confidence, and eloquence to command their allegiance and sway their minds—and the supposition is possible enough—and where will be your antidote to the supremacy which you have given them at the poll? "You are conjuring up imaginary dangers," others will allege; "the mass of the householders admitted by the Act of 1867 are far

shrewder than those at Stoke; and, after all, where are the questions on which they will listen to the nonsense of damaged and extravagant orators?" Again I answer: Do you not in your heart believe that if by any legal flaw the Claimant had escaped his doom and been set free, he might have been returned to Parliament by fifty constituencies at least—more than Lamartine in 1848, or Thiers in 1872, across the Channel? And as to questions regarding which the majority of borough electors might on occasions be aroused to an excitement at once discreditable, ignorant, irrational, sweeping, and pernicious, what do you think of No Popery, the Contagious Diseases Act, Masters and Servants Act, the Conspiracy Act, and the like? What would be the prospect of a general election, if the country were adequately harangued by itinerant declaimers, when a second Trent affair was the uppermost topic in the public mind? And, to conclude, who can be blind to the fact that a vast majority of our population are far less well off than they fancy they have a claim to be, and than they are satisfied that certain social, legal, or political changes, or hazardous anti-economical experiments might make them,—that they are dangerously prone to listen to eloquence of the shallowest sort on these topics, and that skilful and plausible orators might easily, in periods of distress, combine all this floating feeling into a focus, and perhaps even drive it into united action? "Struggles where the very framework of modern society is threatened are as ominous for ourselves as for our neighbours.

The history of trade unionism, for example, is the history of a gradually spreading organisation which tends to unite the working classes of the country against the capitalists. The ideal at which it aims would be one in which the labourers of all countries should be united in one vast alliance. The workmen who begin to see the danger of foreign competition answer, not by abandoning their own combinations, but by endeavouring to bring foreign workmen into harmony with themselves. The attempts made in that direction have hitherto been feeble; but they have a tendency to extend. However much we may laugh at the nonsense talked at Geneva conferences, they indicate the spread of a discontented feeling beyond the limits of any one country, and a disposition in the working classes throughout the world to regard themselves as natural allies in a struggle with their employers. Questions, such as we have been recently discussing, about extension of the franchise and the disestablishment of the Church, may amuse workmen for a time; but they naturally feel that they could use the power of which they are becoming conscious for purposes much more closely affecting their own interests. The belief that a man can get better food and lodging as the reward of a successful agitation is much more exciting than any prospect of purely political changes."

Dangers that are comparatively insignificant when single, magnify enormously in dimensions when two or three come upon us simultaneously or in combina-

tion. Given two bad harvests in succession, a dull or failing trade in many branches, a couple of leaders moderately fluent and skilled in organization, and unions with treasury chests tolerably full, and we may then begin to see with some amazement what we did when we gave over the electoral supremacy of England to a majority of householders, of whom the 6,110 who voted for Kenealy are not unfair samples.

Our parochial and municipal representative bodies are not usually regarded as models of enlarged or enlightened wisdom. Yet if only we voted for the empire on as safe and sagacious a principle as that which we follow in voting for a parish!—if only we elected our House of Commons as rationally as we elect our vestries!—we might escape some grave perils and some startling anomalies. I never like giving arguments in my own words when I can avail myself of better and weightier words by others. I will therefore crave permission here to quote (largely abridged) a letter which appeared several weeks ago in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and which seems to me to need no addition, and to admit of no refutation.

"Sir,—To study my countrymen, I often go to that assembly which Sir Henry Maine tells us is far older than either Parliament or Monarchy—the parish vestry. I there can become acquainted with the lowest class of voters, and see what sort of men our future masters are likely to prove. Scarcely less instructive, perhaps, are those elections to the local boards of health which from one end of the country to the other have just been held. In these great weight is given to wealth and to wisdom, for, in spite of all the rich fools and poor saints that can be brought forward to refute me, wisdom is, I maintain, the

companion of wealth, and not of poverty. For the most part, the man who has saved a pound is wiser than the man who has not saved a penny ; the man who has a good coat on his back is wiser than the man who is in rags ; the man who has a good roof above his head is wiser than the man who lives in a hovel. We may carry it further, and say that there is more wisdom to be found in a house of eight rooms than in a house of four ; and that he who can afford to pay a rent of £60 is likely to be a wiser man than he who can only afford to pay a rent of £30. In a local board of health election, then, it would be reasonable to expect that the more intelligent classes would, without much trouble, carry the day ; for while in the parliamentary election a man of wealth has but one vote, in a board of health election he may have no fewer than twelve. It so happens that I have myself just taken an active part in one of these elections, and though we fought under the most favourable circumstances, and though there was a singular agreement among the larger house-holders, yet our victory was but a narrow one. Had we voted for men to provide us with pure water and well-ventilated sewers on the same plan as that on which we vote for men to provide us with those trifling matters an army, a navy, or laws, we should have been hopelessly defeated.

"All growing villages and towns are, I hold, in one of three states. They have either had a visitation of typhoid fever, or they are having it, or they are going to have it. We, happily, have had our visitation. The lesson was a very sharp one, but it has left us—those of us who are left, that is to say—better citizens, and far more alive to the duties which attach to us as members of a community. A few years ago it was with us a reproach to a man to take part in parish matters. It is now an honour. For years the elections to the board of health had excited no interest. Their proceedings, indeed, from time to time amused us, as we read in our local paper that one member had threatened to punch another's head or pull his nose. Meanwhile, this ignorant board was quietly turning all the streams into open sewers, and, to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population, had half poisoned the pure supply of water which we got from the chalk by mixing with it the landspring water drawn from beneath a large market-garden highly dressed with London manure. If London half poisoned us, we in our turn did our best to poison London. An ingenious market-gardener

was allowed to tap the drain that came from our hospital—a hospital in which our fever cases are nursed—and to turn the sewage on to his watercress beds. But I need not go into further details. The death-rate steadily rose, rents as steadily fell, houses stood empty, the cemetery was enlarged, the undertakers looked cheerful; we talked of mysterious dispensations, but for a time we blamed the board but little, ourselves not at all. We had, indeed, at last begun to make a stir, and had done something, when there came upon us an outbreak of typhoid fever. In a few weeks over 300 persons were struck down with it, and in that year fevers carried off between forty and fifty. The Local Government Board sent down one of their medical inspectors. He did not confine his attention to our foul ditches, our unventilated sewers, our impure water supply. Bad though these were, he was bold enough to show us that we ourselves were almost worse. We had neglected our plainest duties by so long leaving to the ignorant the care of the health of the whole community. He gave us some lessons in sanitary matters as admirable as they were simple, and urged us to form a sanitary association. This we at once did. We instructed ourselves, and by means of pamphlets and broad-sheets we did all we could to instruct our neighbours. When the next election came round, we carried in two of the best members of our association.

"The opposition that had been organized now for the first time looked formidable, and the publicans, with one bright exception, were to a man against us. If I am not mistaken in my numbers, we had an embattled phalanx of no fewer than fifty-one publicans to fight. Each side worked its hardest. The enemy took to prophesying, and we took to facts. The parish was canvassed from house to house as it had never been canvassed before. In the course of the canvassing I happened to come across a French refugee who lives in the parish. He flatly refused to vote at all, as the voting was not by universal suffrage. In vain I pointed out that as the occupier of a house he was surely entitled to secure for his house a good supply of pure water. He did not recognize, he loftily replied, houses or property. He knew of nothing but men. As he did not vote as a man, he would not vote at all. Well, sir, to cut a long story short, we carried three out of four seats, but we carried them by very hard work and by small majorities. *Had we been voting not for*

members of a local board, but for members of the great council of the empire, we should have been hopelessly beaten. We fought with success in a great measure because we fought with confidence, and we fought with confidence because we knew that intelligence would not be swamped by mere numbers. We had left, indeed, nothing undone to win the votes of the smallest voters, and not a few we did secure. We put a plain statement of facts before them, but we found that the printing-press was no fair match for the pot-house.

"Now, sir, if the scene of this contest had been Stoke, and if Dr Kenealy had chosen to put himself forward as a candidate for the board of health of that town, I have no doubt that neither his resemblance to Cromwell and Milton nor his own impudence would have saved him from utter defeat. The men of property, the men of character, the men of sense, the men who had shown strength of mind to overcome the temptations of the present, and to lay up for the future, the men who had not eaten or drunk up to their earnings, but had begun with small savings, and had seen these small savings grow into large savings, would have all gone eagerly and heartily into a contest where their worth and their knowledge would not be swamped by the ignorance of a mob. The day may come when some monstrous delusion, some lie gross as a mountain, open, palpable, may throughout England seize on the lowest and largest body of voters as a class, as it has lately seized on the new voters of Stoke. Should such a storm of passionate prejudice sweep over the land, the men of common sense, the men who have made England what it is, would, if they tried to stem it, find themselves clean swept away. Parish politics have often been a byword among us. I, for my part, in my search after political wisdom, would rather watch the people voting in their parishes than study all the works of all the philosophers who have begun by studying, not men, but Man.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, A Parish Politician.

"*April 20th.*"

For dangers such as those to which I have for the second time ventured, Cassandra-like, to call the attention of my countrymen, there are obviously but two safeguards, the spread of education and of property

extensively among the labouring classes. But are those safeguards adequate? Are they coming? and will they come in time? Is the education we are giving of the right sort, and given to the people who need it? And is the accumulation of property becoming the characteristic of our well-paid artizans? For my part I can scarcely rely on the timeliness or efficacy of a medicine gingerly administered in 1875, and not even expected to operate till 1890; and how far have the extraordinary wages paid for the last few years gone to turn our mechanics and operatives into capitalists? What proportion of the millions distributed has gone with the savings banks, and what to the publican and sinner?

IV.

A GRAVE PERPLEXITY BEFORE US.

MANY persons—especially practical men, busy men, and men charged with the toils and difficulties of administration—are prone to fancy that it is useless and unwise to call attention to "rocks ahead" unless they are close upon us, or unless we have some distinct and well-digested remedy or safeguard to propose. Our rulers especially, whether executive or legislative, are apt to resent such embarrassing and meddlesome forecasting, and to snub and silence the over-anxious prophets of danger who indulge therein. "Sufficient to the day," they tell us, "is the evil thereof—let the future take care of itself."

There are several reasons why I do not share and cannot approve this habit of thought and feeling, and why I deem it shallow, indolent, and noxious. In the first place, dangers which threaten us in the future often take their origin in the action or the negligence of the day that is passing over us. The long years that usually elapse between the seed-time and the harvest of irreparable mischief easily lay vigilance to sleep, and fan us into a false security which is full of peril. These difficulties, which might have

been readily met and conquered if boldly faced as soon as they were perceived, grow into giants if foolishly denied, or hidden from the blind, or fled from by the cowardly. We may be torn to pieces by the eagle which we could have smashed in the egg, or by the tiger which it would have been easy to grapple with while yet a cub. Rocks ahead, which mean shipwreck if unobserved by the look-out man on the prow or at the masthead, are without risk if recognised in time for the vessel to cast anchor or to modify her course. To drop metaphor, administrative dangers may be creeping upon the nation with rapid steps, silent and insidious, and therefore practically unnoticed, which it is not even now too early to confront—or, at least, to consider coolly and profoundly how we propose to confront them when they can no longer be neglected or ignored.

There are two other reasons, finally, why the observation and deliberation I am urging should not be postponed too long, or be too hastily or perfunctorily made—especially in reference to such matters as I now allude to. The nation as a whole—embracing *all* classes of the community—has more and more of late years taken its affairs into its own hands, and (notwithstanding passing appearances to the contrary) is less and less disposed to allow arrangements to be made behind its back, or to permit its rulers for the time being to act for it without consulting it and obtaining its consent. It likes to know what is being done and why it is being done; and since it is

undeniably, as a whole, both very imperfectly informed and very inadequately trained to habits of reflection, the processes of the needful instruction and persuasion are difficult, and the result by no means clear or certain. The English people, moreover, are slow to take in new ideas, to alter old conceptions, to arrive at clear conclusions on difficult and complex questions, especially on such as involve their interests, and are not unlikely to arouse their passions or their prejudices. Now all classes are concerned in the satisfactory and just determination of the problem to which I wish to direct attention; and therefore, if it is not to be determined wrong, it is essential that *time* should be allowed for all its conditions to sink into the nation's mind, there to ferment, germinate, and ripen.

The problem is neither imaginary nor remote. On the contrary, it is imminent, practical, and, as it seems to me, peculiarly serious. It is not precisely new, but our eyes have been rudely awakened, both to its gravity and its imminence, by some of the events of the year that has just closed over us. The numberless and bitter conflicts between employers and employed in nearly every branch of industry, especially in the North of England, have brought it to the front. The essence and the *crux* of it lie in small compass, and admit of being stated clearly and with brevity. Distress among the working classes has been very general and very severe; and while much of it has been inevitable, and has been due to the disturbed

and depressed state of trade throughout the world, it has been enormously aggravated and prolonged by their own mistaken and perverse proceedings. For a great deal of it they have themselves been directly and exclusively responsible. Work has been deplorably scarce, but they have made it, by their own voluntary action, far scarcer than it would otherwise have been. In many instances masters have been ruined, and their works have been closed in consequence, and the men they employed have been thrown upon their own resources, and not unfrequently reduced to destitution, by no fault of their own. But in many other instances the men have voluntarily thrown themselves out of work by refusing to accept it at the reduced rate of wages, which was all their impoverished employers could afford to offer them. They deliberately *deprived themselves* of employment, and their consequent privations, however severe, were entirely gratuitous. Of course, therefore, in strict equity they were not entitled either to relief from the rates or to assistance from charitable neighbours; and, to do them justice, they have not usually applied for either. Earnings—and usually ample earnings for these times of unprofitable trade and cheap food—were within their grasp if they chose to stretch forth their hands to take them; but they preferred to be idle rather than work except on their own terms—which they had an irrefutable claim to do. They were within their legal rights, however foolish or short-sighted they may have been thus to exercise

those rights. So far the problem was simple enough —or, rather, there was no problem at all to solve.

But here the difficulty and the complexity come in. In the intricate system of our manufacturing industry one set of workmen are inextricably bound up with others who cannot for any length of time continue to labour or to earn a sustenance without them. For example, to make the matter clear to outsiders, we will take the case of the cotton manufacture. The hands in a mill may be roughly divided into three classes: the *preparers* (scutchers, carders, drawers, &c.), the *spinners* (whether hand-spinners or self-actors), and the *weavers*. If the spinners turn out on a question of wages or of rules, and cease work, the preparers are not needed, and cannot be kept on, and the weavers can no longer be supplied with warp or weft, and must stop also. Likewise, if the weavers strike, neither preparers nor spinners (as a rule) can be kept at work. If one class of hands quarrel with their masters, both the other classes are paralysed, and the entire machinery is thrown *out of gear*, as the phrase is, though only one class out of the three is concerned in the dispute, and the other two may be in no degree either discontented or to blame. Often, no doubt, all of them pull together and support one another; and this is usually true where the question at issue concerns a *percentage* reduction or advance of wages throughout the mill; but it has often happened that the spinners *only* (or *separately*) strike work, and thus force the employer

either to yield or to give notice of cessation of employment to the preparers and weavers—who are possibly quite innocent, possibly disapprove the spinners' action, at all events who may or may not be accomplices, and who therefore technically cannot be said to refuse offered work, but have work and earnings both taken from them.

This used very generally to be the *modus operandi* in trade disputes, though less usual now since the introduction of self-acting mules, and made such cases peculiarly difficult to deal with. The embarrassment was enhanced by the fact that the spinners, being the most highly paid class of cotton operatives, and having comparatively rich unions to maintain them through the contest, could hold out with ease, while the weavers and others had seldom such resources. The spinners in a factory, again, were but few, and it might and may happen that perhaps fifty spinners could at their pleasure stop the mill, and thus deprive five hundred fellow operatives of their bread.[1] Much the same may be said in relation to the weavers, though in a more mitigated form.

Now it is generally held that all persons and families actually destitute are entitled to claim support from the poor rates, however that destitution may have

[1] Similar divisions and subdivisions of workmen, entailing analogous embarrassments, exist in most other branches of industry; but I do not quote them, being anxious to make my exposition of the problem to be considered as lucid as possible.

been originally produced. It may have arisen from drunkenness or habitual misconduct, from waste of adequate means, from quarrels with their employers which could not be reconciled, from incessant turbulence and unmanageable conduct which had driven trade from the locality, as well as from accidents or misfortunes or outlying causes such as come under the general description of "the visitation of God." Still, if the destitution be real, if the applicants be indisputably out of work, and if they are provably unable to obtain work by seeking for it, no guardians of the poor or relieving officers would hold themselves justified in refusing them assistance and support. This may possibly not be the rigid meaning of the law according to its legal and literal interpretation; but this is the interpretation put upon it by those who have to administer it, and by the public at large, and this is the practical working of the system. The original design of the Poor Law, and probably its strict and formal meaning still is, that the guardians are to find employment for all the destitute, to find them work, or to feed and house them in default of work if it cannot be found or made; and, as we all know, the real operation of the system is that as soon as the workhouses are full, and often long before (and the workhouse accommodation is notoriously insufficient to meet any extraordinary crisis), the destitute are maintained at their own houses by relief ordered by the guardians. Nor is this all. In the majority of cases they live rent free, for no house-owners dream of turn-

ing the really destitute out of their dwellings because they cannot pay their rent, and the guardians, properly enough, will not, and we believe may not, pay their rent for them. They are therefore, as a rule, housed by the landlords of the parish, and fed and maintained by the ratepayers. There is no abuse or maladministration in all this. It is simply the result of a recognised legitimate obligation, the normal working of a law which no one dreams of disobeying or denying, which no one thus far, so far as we know, has protested against or proposed deliberately to repeal.

Now, how are the various classes of applicants we have just enumerated to be dealt with? This is no idle, or imaginative, or premature question; for such applicants are already appearing on the scene in the iron districts, and the coal districts, and the cotton districts, in Wales, in Yorkshire, in Lancashire, in Durham, in Northumberland, and this not by thousands, but by tens and hundreds of thousands. Let us look only at the representative instance we have chosen, the cotton-manufacturing operatives of Preston, Blackburn, and other populous hives of industry in the north-west. The spinners, who have refused work and wages for themselves, and by so doing have stopped the machinery which gave employment and support for five times their own numbers, may be dealt with in a comparatively simple fashion, even if they were obstinate enough to prolong their contest to the last extremity, and mean enough to apply for relief when their union funds were exhausted—both

of which are unlikely in the extreme. The guardians, if endowed with sense and nerve equal to the occasion, could sternly send them away empty as voluntary and persistent idlers, and, if they were really destitute, commit them to prison for neglecting to support their families. The same stern and effectual measure of justice might be dealt out to the weavers, if they were the delinquents and the strike were confined to them alone. But these are not the difficult cases. What could the guardians do with the applicants who crowded the doors in immeasurably larger numbers, whose claim was based upon the true and legally unanswerable plea that "they had been turned out by no fault of their own, that they wished to work, and had applied for work, but that, owing to the fault of some other branch of their fellow-workmen, the mills were closed against them, and that they and their children were starving?" These are no fancied cases—they have been seen by thousands last year in Lancashire. How are the administrators of relief to refuse their application? and would the law sustain them in a refusal? But there are other cases probably still more numerous and perplexing—fathers of destitute families who were crying out in their wretchedness for work at any rate of wages, who had voted and protested against the foolish and suicidal strike, but had been outvoted, bullied, and overborne by their younger and unburdened fellow-operatives, and who could not keep body and soul together on the miserable pittance allowed them by the trades-unions—a pittance dwindling away week

by week. How impossible it was felt to be to withstand their supplicating claims for aid was shown in all the towns in which the silly conflicts occurred last year, where the masters were constantly found supporting the families of the very workmen who had turned out from their mills, sheltering them gratuitously in cottages for which they paid no rent, and furnishing them with food which (under compulsion from their misled associates) they had refused to *earn*.

Such being the law, or the recognised interpretation and the practical administration of the law, what provision or safeguard do we possess, or can we devise, against a crisis and possible catastrophe which is already looming in the distance, the preparatory causes of which are distinctly and undeniably in operation, which *may* come upon us at almost any time, unless foreseen and averted by timely precaution, and which assuredly will overtake us if the present stagnation in the most important branches of the national industry should continue and increase, as there is every apparent likelihood that it will?

This brings us to the closing feature of the grave social condition before us to which I am calling attention—perhaps not the least ominous feature of the whole. Who are the principal ratepayers of the districts on which this exhausting calamity has fallen —or been brought? Whose property has to provide the funds to meet the drain of feeding a starving population, counted already by hundreds of thousands —soon, probably enough, by millions—starving, more-

over, as I have shown, directly or indirectly, to a great extent, by their own voluntary act? The first fund to be drawn upon, no doubt, is the accumulated resources of the trades-unions, the savings of the foreseeing operatives—savings, let us remember, contributed originally with the object of meeting periods of slack demand, of failing work, of accidental stoppages of mills and iron foundries, of sickness and old age—in short, all the varieties of *inevitable* bad times which are certain to occur periodically in all extensive and complicated industries; but which savings are now habitually wasted, at the pleasure of the leaders, in futile and disastrous struggles for higher wages than the state of the trade or the redundance of numbers seems able to permit. Usually the next resource of those out of work consists of special levies from those still employed, avowedly to support the strike or the lock-out. These resources, however, seldom last long, and can never meet prolonged periods of disaster or unprofitable production such as are now upon us; nor do they ever provide adequate maintenance for more than a portion of the numbers affected by the catastrophe. It is only a few of the more highly paid classes of artisans who have stored up funds adequate to sustain either an obstinate contest or a prolonged period of distress. Then, and generally not till then, the destitute, or those threatened with destitution, fall back upon charitable aid, voluntary or obligatory—soup-kitchens, relief associations, and, last and largest, the poor rates. The first two are nearly always liberal

and prompt, and often admirably organised, and seldom inquire too closely as to how far the destitution has been brought about by the folly or perversity of the sufferers. And this is the explanation of the fact, so unfairly used by the Ministers and ministerial defenders, of the small and slow increase of recognised and reported pauperism. The industrial classes—the *real* workers, especially in the manufacturing districts—do not become paupers till every other resource has been exhausted. But all the three resources I have named are alike fed and furnished by the owners of property in each locality. The philanthropists, the shopkeepers, and the proprietors are all ratepayers, and on them the burden ultimately and inevitably falls in the end—and that end, in prolonged crises like the present, comes early, and comes rapidly at last. And this is the special point which I am anxious the public should distinctly recognise. Now who *are* the ratepayers in those districts where distress specially prevails, where coal-mines are unworked, where iron foundries are silent and furnaces blown out, where factories are shut up, where half-time prevails and spreads week by week—in fine, where strikes and lock-outs are the order of the day, and workmen by thousands persist in resisting any reduction of wages, and refuse 20s. a week because they cannot obtain 22s.? The ratepayers here consist mainly of two classes—the retail tradespeople, the shopkeepers, whose profits have been deplorably cut down or swept away by the prevalent distress and the consequent curtail-

ment of their custom, and who, moreover, are sadly impoverished by the credit they are virtually forced to give, and which frequently eventuates in hopeless loss; the mill-owners, the iron founders, the colliery proprietors, and other "captains of industry," whose gains have, for some years, been exchanged for losses, and who see their property—the result of a life of toil—rapidly drained away, and ruin perhaps staring them in the face; and the owners of house-property who can obtain no rent from the occupiers, who are often the immediate causes or instruments of the disastrous scene.

Now, let us sum up all these facts, none of which will be denied, and which I believe to be stated without undue colouring or exaggeration, and draw from them a succinct picture of the position of which they are the salient features. According to the existing law, or to the usual understanding and the practical administration of that law sanctioned and sustained by the prevailing sympathies of the community, all labouring families, however numerous, all the working classes in whatever branch of industry, are entitled to be maintained at the expense of the property of the locality in which they happen to reside as soon as they become undeniably destitute or unable to earn a livelihood for themselves, however that destitution may originally have been caused, and however prolonged the period during which it may continue. At the same time the vast extent and variety of these

industries, their singular complexity and close and intricate connections, render it possible (and by no means infrequent) for disturbance in one branch to entail stagnation on others, and perhaps for a hundred or a thousand dissatisfied artisans indirectly to deprive many thousands of their usual employment and their daily bread—and in such a fashion or under such peculiar circumstances as to render it practically impossible to ignore or refuse their claims to gratuitous subsistence out of the income or the earnings of their neighbours—nay, moreover, that it has become feasible, and not wholly unexampled, for special classes of artisans, by dexterous and well-understood if not openly avowed combination, so to assist each other *vicissim* in their conflicts with their employers as to render resistance on the part of these employers enormously difficult, costly, and perhaps ruinous, however righteous and even obligatory this resistance may have become. So that, strictly and practically speaking, those struggles between masters and men for the division of the wealth created by their joint exertions, which have of late been so frequent, so angry, and so obstinate, are carried on under conditions intrinsically and indefensibly *unfair;* inasmuch as not only are the masters heavily weighted in the strife by the enormous costliness of their fixed plant, but are further weighted (often actually, always potentially) by the liability of having to furnish their antagonists with the means of continuing the strife *ad libitum.* It is as though the defenders of a

beleaguered fortress were compelled to furnish their assailants with powder and ball when their own supplies fell short; or, to vary the similitude, as if the besiegers were bound to send daily supplies of food and ammunition into the city to enable them to hold out the longer—modes of proceeding, either of which would be regarded as alike grotesquely iniquitous. It is scarcely too much to say that the present state of the law and practice virtually give to discontented, grasping, or ambitious artisans—so far at least as the necessaries of life are concerned—a command over the property of their fellow-citizens which has a sinister resemblance and approach to the pretensions of Socialism; and this at a time when those very artisans are perversely engaged in sapping the foundations of that property and waging war against the prosperity of those fellow-citizens. And we have not been left without warning how possible it is, not only on the Continent but even in sober England, for dreamers, demagogues, and agitators—often rather shallow than distinctly designing or ill-disposed—to organise the masses when distressed and unemployed, and direct their hostility against the most firmly established institutions of the land.

As it is, no doubt, the actuality of the position—so undeniably inequitable and even monstrous, when thus laid before the world in its logical nakedness—is materially mitigated by one important consideration, viz., that the sustenance legally claimable by and commonly supplied to the destitute is much below

what they could have earned by regular industry, and therefore would never be grudged where the destitution resulted from inevitable circumstances and not from their voluntary act. But, on the other hand, the position of the employers is strengthened, as it seems to me, enormously, by the consideration, equally relevant and equally notorious, that they never reduce wages and thereby give occasion to the struggles in question, unless when they have worked without profit or at an actual loss for considerable periods of time—that is, have long handed over to the men the whole or more than the whole of their joint earnings. Nevertheless, when we have given both these facts the full consideration which is their due, the problem which it is desirable for the public to ponder and, if possible, to probe and solve, while there is time, remains grave, complicated, and approaching. I have been more bent on stating it than on attempting, here at least,[1] to offer a solution. Its gravity and its complexity will be obvious as soon as it is fully realised. Its proximity will, I think, be plain to all who have watched and studied adequately the lessons which the very serious industrial distresses and conflicts of 1878

[1] In passing, and as bearing incidentally on this question, I would desire to call attention to a remarkable paper on "National Insurance," published in the December number of the *Nineteenth Century*—a paper which I cannot help believing contains, or will contain when thoroughly matured and cleared of its apparent omissions and defects, the outlines of a scheme which may lead to a rectification of many of our graver difficultion.

were suited to convey. These are not yet over, nor are the lessons yet laid to heart; and their gravity and imminence will be most adequately comprehended by those who realise at once the increasing influence of the operative classes in the political arena, and the warm sympathy which, in spite of their grievous misguidance and their perverse mistakes, their condition still commands among the thinking and stirring classes of the nation.

V.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE SOIL.

THERE is a notion widely prevalent, habitually asserted by some, carelessly admitted by others, often formalised into a proposition, and usually taken for granted because scarcely ever denied or argued, which nevertheless would appear to be questionable; and which, till questioned and sifted, must not be suffered to grow into an axiom. The earth, we are told, has been given as an inheritance to *mankind at large*, not to this or that generation, or to this or that tribe or nation, far less to this or that class or section of a people, but as a source of sustenance to all, for the support and maintenance of succeeding and increasing generations of men; that, in fact, it was designed to grow food for man; that by no right, or justice, or propriety can it be diverted to any other purpose or neglected for this purpose; that its allotment to this or that set of holders, whether communal or individual, can only be warranted on the plea that such appropriation is best fitted to develop its resources:—that, in fine, and to speak broadly, it is the duty of the land to support as large a population as possible, and that the criterion by which all use and tenure of land must

be judged is its fulfilling, or tendency to fulfil, this great end.

The proposition is asserted and proclaimed with every gradation of latitude and positiveness; and, *primâ facie*, it contains so much truth and plausibility, that it is not easy to detect, in its varying forms, where fallacy and extravagance begin. The advocates of the masses, who affect to defend their interests and to speak in their name, boldly maintain the indefeasible natural claim of every man to as much land as is needed to support him, and denounce the proprietor who turns sheep-farms into deer forests, and the crofts and holdings of wretched cottiers into sheep-walks, as a robber and oppressor, and the nobleman who insists upon his acres of ornamental but unprofitable lawn, while the labourers—a score of whom that lawn, if in potatoes, might support—are half starving round his park, as not far off a murderer. Others point out that all civilised nations scout the claim of the savage hunter, who needs fifty square miles of forest and wild land to supply him with the game on which he feeds, and make no scruple of dispossessing him and turning his land to more productive uses: and then ask wherein his case differs from that of the Highland Ducal Chief, who keeps thousands of acres as wilderness and wood for the sake of the stags and grouse which give him little beyond sport. A recent writer, more moderate in appearance, holds the landowners of England to have grievously failed in their duty to their countrymen because the soil produces

only half what it might be made to yield, and implies not obscurely, that this failure on their part ought to be remedied by a different distribution of their neglected acres. Adherents of the Land and Labour League would have the State gradually obtain the ownership of the soil, and allot to every man the five or ten acres which they deem his due; while Mr Atherton is more precise, and would solve the problem by assigning to every baby an acre of land in the parish in which it happened to be born. Political economists, as a rule, have not troubled themselves to contest the fundamental assumption that it is obligatory on the land to produce as much food, and to maintain as large a population as it can; indeed, have tacitly accepted the doctrine—evading rather than discussing it; and have argued merely that private proprietorship, and probably large properties, offer the greatest likelihood of obtaining this maximum result;—or they have met all practical inferences of a subversive or spoliative tendency by pointing out that though a man may be entitled to five or ten acres as his portion of God's bequest, he is not entitled to it in any special locality he may prefer; that practically the land of the globe is unlimited in extent, and a vast proportion of it still virtually unappropriated; and that till all this is disposed of, no man can be entitled to dispossess his neighbour.

We think it is time to ask whether the fundamental assumption on which such a superstructure is coming to be built is a truism or a fallacy—whether the soil

is bound to produce as much human food as possible —whether, in very deed, Providence designed the earth to be cultivated and peopled up to its maximum capacity—and whether it should be the aim of statesmen to co-operate in the fulfilment of that supposed design—whether, in fine, the whole globe cultivated and cropped like one vast market garden—England "with every rood of ground maintaining its man"—is precisely that golden age, that culminating point of progress, that finished goal and ideal of humanity, that we contemplate and desire.

Now, one of the safest and most effectual modes of dealing with a doctrine of which you *scent* the unsoundness, but do not distinctly discern wherein the error lies, is to trace out the consequences which flow from it, and the conclusions to which, logically followed out, it will ultimately lead us. If these are obviously inadmissible, then the doctrine may confidently be pronounced fallacious. This is the *reductio ad absurdum* of geometry. Let us apply it to the case before us.

First, then,—if it be true that land ought to be made as productive as it can be, and that every owner or occupier is bound, in justice to his fellow-men or fellow-countrymen, to make the soil he cultivates yield the maximum amount of human food, it follows indisputably that those crops, only or preferentially, must be grown which give this maximum result. A farmer or proprietor who grows a comparatively innutritive crop is guilty proportionally of the same derelic-

tion of duty as the one who grows no crops at all. Now, though we have no authorised calculations, it is generally estimated that potatoes offer the crop that produces this maximum amount of human food, and that more men can live on (say) twenty acres of this root than on the same area applied in any other way.[1] If it were so, then all soil ought preferentially to be thus planted (allowance of course being made for whatever rotation of crops was needed to keep up fertility), and England, or the world, ought to become one vast potato-garden. Next come grain crops, wheat or oats, though in what precise ratio is scarcely ascertained. However this may be, there can be no question that arable land laid out in the produce of cereals will support a far larger population than an equal extent of pasture or meadow land applied to the production of animal food,—probably in the proportion of five to one.

Obviously, then,—and, if the thesis we are considering be sound, the proposition seems to admit of no dispute, — since animal food is notoriously not

[1] I have been unable to arrive at any consentaneous or perfectly reliable information on this point, though I have consulted all the authorities published and personal within my reach. The most competent parties disagreed, however, widely as to the quantity of food producible on a given acreage, and materially as the quantity needed for human sustenance. But according to the best data I have been able to collect, it may be roughly calculated that a given amount of land of good quality and fairly treated, will yield food in potatoes for five persons, in wheat for four, and in butcher's meat for one. The details, however, accurate or inaccurate, are immaterial as regards the argument.

essential to life, health, or reasonable strength in human beings,[1] the application of land to the breeding or feeding of sheep or cattle is distinctly wrong if carried beyond that very limited extent which is needed for milk,[2] manure, hides or wool, or unless confined to those districts (if any) where from climate —that is, from poverty of soil, excess of wet, or deficiency of sunshine—harvests are so precarious that a given acreage would yield actually less in root or grain crops than in animal food. As cereals and potatoes support, acre per acre, five times as much human life as butcher's meat, potatoes or cereals only, wherever possible, ought to be grown.

The next corollary is that no portion of the soil ought to be occupied in the production of any articles not needed for the supply of human wants. A certain portion of the surface of the earth must of course always be covered with forests, because wood is needed for houses, shipbuilding, and fuel, but no purely ornamental timber can be allowed : and forests should, as a rule, be rigidly confined to those latitudes and altitudes where no crops will grow—in fact, to high mountains and cold countries. Wine, again, is as-

[1] We need not discuss this point, or call specially vegetarian writers to confirm us. A reference to well-fed and housed agricultural labourers who never taste meat ; to the Scotch peasantry who live almost exclusively on oatmeal (see Somerville's "Autobiography of a Working Man"); and to various graminiverous races scattered over the warmer countries of the world, is sufficient for our purpose.

[2] It may perhaps be doubted whether milk, however nutritive, is at all essential.

suredly no necessary of life, though an exquisite luxury; vines therefore must be planted only in the poorest soils, which are available for no more nutritive crops. A perfect revolution would thus take place in many European countries; for one-sixth of the surface of France is said to be occupied with vineyards, and a considerable, though smaller, proportion of Spain, Italy, and Germany. The same restriction must be placed on the cultivation of barley and hops, though, perhaps, one less absolutely prohibitive, as beer may be held to contain certain important elements of nutrition. Assuredly, no tobacco must be grown, for tobacco does nothing towards supporting life; it needs good soil, and is, I believe, an exhausting crop. It is doubtful whether mulberry trees for silk will not also come under the ban of the principle we are now considering, for mulberry trees take up some land, and land usually of good quality; while, by the same rule, flower gardens, which are wholly unproductive, must everywhere be swept away in favour of kitchen gardens, which maintain many households.

A further logical consequence—though perhaps one which will not weigh very heavily against the doctrine from which it flows—will be the extermination of all wild animals, except such as dwell in those northern forests or tropical wastes and jungles which can never be made available for cultivation; and, further, the reduction in the numbers of our domestic animals (horses, sheep, and domestic cattle) to the limits required for actual utilitarian purposes, such as draught

and clothing. Game, *chevaux de luxe*, deer, and foxes must disappear; and perhaps we need not concern ourselves greatly with their disappearance.[1] Another consequence, however, and the last we shall notice, is far more serious. In the name of the same principle we shall have to dispense with public as well as private parks, with village greens and commons, with all open spaces, in fact, except such as may be *needed* near or in our cities for ventilation, health, and exercise—not *recreation*, be it observed; that is barred by the conditions of the problem.

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[1] It may even be a question whether the doctrine under consideration would not prohibit and preclude the existing practice of burying our dead, and thus solve at once the agitated controversy about cremation. In rigorous logic, and by calculation carried far enough, a time must come when the dead in our country will outnumber and dispossess the living. We have a natural prejudice—likely to grow stronger and more imperious rather than to die away—against disturbing the bones of those who have once been committed to the earth; and one not quite so general, but still a growing one, against depositing many in one grave, or at least in the same spot. It is usually felt that each person is entitled to have his "six feet of earth" to lie in, and that it shall be his *for ever;* and grave-yards are "consecrated" and set apart for this purpose. Now, it is found that, allowing for walks and necessary side spaces, 1,200 graves can be made out of one acre;—the deaths in England and Wales (being now above 500,000 annually, and increasing year by year) will, therefore, need the allotment in perpetuity of about 500 acres per annum, or 50,000 in each century. Every year, that is, those who die in England require, monopolise, and *taboo* as much land as would suffice for the sustenance of 50 families. Thus, as the area of England and Wales extends to about 37,000,000 acres, in a period easily calculated the dead (if we still eschew cremation) will have eaten or elbowed out the living.

It is difficult to picture to ourselves the condition to which a country thus logically acting on the principle insisted upon by popular declaimers, and carelessly conceded by many economists, would, in a few generations, be reduced. The decline of civilisation would go hand in hand with the progress of cultivation, and the growth of population. The entire aspect of these islands especially would be transmogrified out of recognition. When every field is allotted to its proper crop, and taught to produce its maximum amount of food, and that food of the most nutritious sort, when the claims of the people are satisfied by their being allowed to multiply as fast and far as the productiveness of the soil will warrant, all may have enough to eat and wherewithal to clothe themselves (*on condition, always, that they cease all multiplication at that point*); but the golden age thus reached will be one of comparative barbarism, not of culminating civilisation. Men's actual necessities, their lowest natural wants, may be satisfied; but all artificial wants must be denied or crushed, since the very ground-work of the principle assumes that land must be devoted to the production of the necessaries of life to the exclusion of its luxuries; and as we all know, it is out of artificial, increasing, and encroaching wants that all civilisation has it origin. Nations grow from tribes, man advances from the savage state, simply by becoming dissatisfied with what is merely needed for life and health, by demanding the superfluous, by insisting upon luxuries and

comforts, by making some provision for the fanciful and the ideal, by refusing any longer to be content with food and raiment only; by solacing the mind as well as filling the stomach; by adding to the lust of the flesh the lust of the eye also, and the pride of life. Moreover, there can be no greater delusion than to picture this golden age of consummate production and maximum population as one of idleness or ease. No life, as experience shows, is comparable for grinding hardship and incessant toil with that of the peasant who tries to live out of a minimum of acres cultivated up to the highest limit of productiveness. Man as he should be, and as we aspire to see him, eats that he may *live*—live something that is worthy to be called life. The people of a country "where every rood of earth maintains its man," must be content to live that they may eat, and to spend all their time and energies in providing for the merest animal necessities.

We shall be answered, of course, by the maintainers of the doctrine we are questioning—"Oh! but we never intended to push our principle so far. We simply argued that no man in any country has a right to monopolise land—*i.e.*, to keep it for his delectation while others require it for their sustenance. Nor should we ever maintain in its nakedness the extreme proposition that the soil must be made to support as many persons as possible, but merely as many *valuable and desirable* persons — not as large a population of all sorts or of any sort, but as large a

population of that class and character, of that vigour, capacity, and full development in all directions, which suitable citizens of a civilised State ought to possess. Thus limited and guarded, we still consider our principle as not only defensible, but sound. We have no desire to see a potato-fed people, however numerous, because we know that a potato diet will only produce an inferior race ; and we should never propose even to confine the population to wheaten or oaten bread, because we believe that a fair proportion of animal food—and perhaps even stimulants in modertion—are needed for the developing the healthy, vigorous, and complete powers of the human frame."

Very well ! I am not inclined, and have no need, to demur to the proposition thus limited ; the *principle involved* in the limitation containing everything for which I argue—everything, in fact, required to reduce it to a harmless truism. We are agreed that the object to be kept in view is not to cover the earth with mere swarms of human beings without reference to quality, but to make it the habitation of as ample numbers as may be of such men as statesmen, patriots, and philanthropists desire to see—as, in a word, we all aspire to make the human race consist of. Man, it is conceded, cannot live on roots at all, nor on bread alone ; he must be allowed meat. Man, I add, cannot live even upon all three elements of sustenance combined : he must be allowed much else ; he needs far other nutriment if he is to be what we wish him to become ; he has something beyond his body to be

nourished—something else beside his stomach to be filled. It is admitted that he needs not only food, but succulent and strengthening food; not only clothing, but warm clothing; not only shelter from the elements, but sufficing and comfortable dwellings. But this list by no means comprises the total of his *wants*, nor the total possessions to which he is entitled, if by industry, talent, and the frugality that leads to accumulation, he can procure and retain them. Our ideal man requires for his development the elegancies and even perhaps the luxuries which are the conditions of refinement. He needs the beauties of nature to rejoice his eye and cultivate his taste; flowers in his garden, however small it be; shrubberies and groves about his house; forest trees in his park, if he can afford one; not a vast expanse of corn-fields and green crops, which can please the eye of no one but a farmer or a market gardener. He requires home animals—dogs and singing birds—around his pathway; not merely cattle that he can eat, and sheep that he may shear. He needs something, however little, of *superfluity* around him; something that is not *merely* useful. He needs a dwelling that shall not be strictly four walls and a roof; an abode that shall satisfy his higher tastes, as well as his bare necessities; a residence—a mansion, if you will—that shall be rich in associations and suggestions, and an object of beauty to the neighbourhood around. He needs two other things besides, if he is to be the worthy, happy, and fully-ripened man we are con-

templating; two things which imply and include much —*room* and *leisure*. He must have time for study, time for research, time for mental acquisition of every kind; above all, time for thought, if either man or mankind is to make progress; and this leisure time is not to be secured without superfluous means and accumulated wealth. Lastly, he must have space—space to be alone in; space to exonerate him from that eternal presence of his fellow men which is fatal to the growth of the higher and profounder life; space for that sometime solitude without which no man can know what he is, or become what he might be. I quoted lately in this *Review* the testimony of one lately departed and much venerated philosopher, who was penetrated with all human sympathies, and assuredly not less alive than any of us to the claims of the poor upon the soil; but it is so true, and so appropriate to the matter at issue, that there is no harm in quoting it again :—

"There is room in the world, no doubt, and even in old countries, for an immense increase of population, supposing the arts of life to go on improving, and capital to increase. But although it may be innocuous, I confess I see very little reason for desiring it. The density of population necessary to enable mankind to obtain, in the greatest degree, all the advantages both of co-operation and of social intercourse, has, in all the more populous countries, been attained. A population may be too crowded, though all be amply supplied with food and raiment. It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated is a very poor ideal. Solitude, in the sense of being often alone, is essential to any depth of meditation or of character; and solitude, in the presence of natural

beauty and grandeur, is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations, which are not only good for the individual, but which society could ill do without. Nor is there much satisfaction in contemplating the world, with nothing left to the spontaneous activity of nature, with every rood of land brought into cultivation which is capable of growing food for human beings; every flowery waste or natural pasture ploughed up; all quadrupeds or birds which are not domesticated for man's use exterminated as his rivals for food; every hedgerow or superfluous tree rooted out, and scarcely a place left where a wild shrub or flower could grow without being eradicated as a weed in the name of improved agriculture." — J. S. MILL. *Principles of Political Economy:* "The Stationary State."

The true consideration, then, which should govern the distribution and the use of land is, not what system will yield most food and support the densest population, but what will produce and sustain the finest race physically, morally, and intellectually. The quality, rather than the quantity, of human existence is the purpose to be set before us.

VI.

THE RIGHT USE OF A SURPLUS ;[1] OR, REMISSION OF TAXES AN ABUSE OF REVENUE.

In a progressive country like Great Britain, each successive generation has its special danger to avert, its special reform to establish, its special duty to discharge. In the time of the fathers, one set of mischiefs are paramount and rampant; and practically it may be advantageous that the attention of reformers should be exclusively directed to these, and not disadvantageous even that the national zeal should exaggerate their importance and the perils which they menace. It is in this piecemeal fashion that progress with us has been in the habit of marching; and perhaps it is owing to this fashion that our work is often done so efficiently that it has not to be done over again. But one grave evil attends this system. The notions, the animosities, and the fears of the fathers are frequently transmitted to the sons who live under the reformed *régime*, and have an entirely different set of dangers to contend against; yet they go on repeating phrases and formulas that have lost their meaning; fighting against antagonists that are

[1] *Contemporary Review*, September 1875.

dead and buried, or at least have become shadowy and insignificant; and pursuing objects that perhaps have already been pursued too far. The prevalent habit of mind, the direction or *set* of principles and maxims, survive the circumstances which were their origin and justification; and, like all such survivals, become noxious as soon as they cease to be useful. Weapons and tools should be religiously buried when they have won their victory and finished their work. Unfortunately, however, this maxim is little in favour among us; like men who have grown rich by rigid parsimony, but continue the practices of saving and self-denial when ample wealth has converted wise economy into miserly unworthiness, we make an end of our means, an idol of our instrument, and permanent principles out of what were merely the fitting expedients of a pressing crisis or a passing hour.

Now, it appears to me that we are grievously in danger of making this mistake at present in many of our national transactions. We are forgetting that a virtue out of season easily degenerates into a vice, and that the wisest maxims of public life cease to be sound by ceasing to be timely. The stern and vigilant economy, which was worthy of all praise, and was perhaps the first requisite in a statesman in an age when the public revenue was noxiously collected and extravagantly squandered, becomes simply a timid weakness or a bad mental habit, when objects immeasurably more valuable than money are sacrificed or postponed lest money should be spent—even though

the money needed for effecting them is attainable at a moment's notice, without traversing one sound principle of taxation or laying one objectionable burden on the people—nay, when the money is actually in our Treasury, but is given away, almost as a matter of course, as an unrequired surplus.

Thirty or forty years ago the pension list was large, lavish, and not too well fitted to bear investigation; articles of food and first necessity coming from abroad were either entirely prohibited, or so heavily taxed as to be virtually almost inaccessible, and at all events to maintain high prices for home produce; customs duties were levied upon upwards of 500 principal articles of import—many upon raw materials, thus burdening our own industry—many upon foreign manufactures, designed to afford an artificial and mischievous protection to that very industry—many so complicated and perverse as materially to interfere with commerce; others so high as largely to check consumption, and limit the trade which should have paid for them. In short, at that time the whole spirit which presided over the collection of the revenue was so noxious and perverse that British statesmen might well be pardoned for regarding the liberation of trade, the reduction of expenditure, and thereby of taxation, and the cheapening of the main articles of food and general consumption, as about their most pressing functions; and Liberal politicians were almost excusable in considering retrenchment, economy, and repeal of customs and excise duties as constituting

the first, if not comprising the whole, duty of man. They said so daily, and soon got into the habit of thinking so.

But in 1875 everything is changed; the old evils no longer exist; the old language is no longer appropriate. The politicians who persist in wielding the old weapons, using the old maxims, running on the old lines, are like artillery-men who keep pointing their guns and firing away in the same direction as before when their foes have retreated, made a flank movement, and are now menacing their rear. The pension list has been reduced and purified, and jobbery has scarce a hole or corner wherein to hide itself. The principal articles liable to customs dues have been reduced to about *five*, and those are so levied as to be no longer practically a fetter upon commerce; articles of food, and raw materials, as well as foreign manufactures, can be imported absolutely free; the main proportion of our indirect taxes (nearly six-sevenths) are raised from articles of luxury, and probably I ought to say, of noxious luxury—certainly of luxuries that needy men can well dispense with—namely, spirits, tobacco, beer and wine, and licenses therewith connected. Specially objectionable duties, or those so regarded, such as "taxes on knowledge," advertisement duties, fire insurance, &c., have been repealed; indeed, the entire amount repealed within the last fifteen years has exceeded £37,000,000. In fine, I doubt if a single tax remains which can be fairly represented as either a real fetter upon trade, or an

unfair or heavy burden on the people. The incidence of our taxation is, I believe, as equitable as it can be made; the amount of it is far lighter than it used to be, and, I believe, lighter, too, than that of any other great country with which a fair comparison can be instituted. But this is not all: during the forty years that this astonishing relief from our burdens has been going on, the wealth of the country—*i.e.*, its power of bearing those burdens—has been increasing at an altogether unprecedented rate; the aggregate wealth subject to the income tax has nearly doubled, and the wages of labour, taking one branch of industry with another, have risen twenty-five per cent. With those few, and as I hold utterly unsound, fiscal authorities who condemn all indirect taxation as objectionable, I enter here into no controversy. No others, I apprehend, will demur to the above representation; but we append in a note a few confirmatory facts.[1]

[1] Absolute exactitude in the following figures I do not pretend to claim; nor can I enter into the lengthened explanations which would be necessary to lay before my readers all the sources from which these estimates are framed. But any one who is disposed to question, or desirous to verify, them, will I think be satisfied if they will consult not only the annual official returns, but the following works:—

Edinburgh Review. January 1860 .	*British taxation.*
"Taxation of the United Kingdom" .	By Dudley Baxter.
"National Debts" . . .	„ Do.
"Wages, Earnings, and Taxation of the Working Classes of Great Britain"	„ Leone Levi.
"Pressure of Taxation" . . .	„ George Norman.
"Political Problems for our Age" .	„ W. R. Greg.
The Statesman's Year Book, 1875 .	„ Fred. R. Martin.

Our position, then, is this—and it seems desirable to place it broadly and plainly before the country, so plainly and broadly that, if contested at all, it must be contested not on details of figures, where errors

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I.—Comparative Taxation of this and other Countries.

I have endeavoured in vain to reach any near approximation to a correct result. The proportion which the *State* bears to the *Federal* expenditure in the United States, to say nothing of their large revenue derived from the sale of waste lands; the various items which are paid out of local funds in one country, and out of imperial taxation in another; and the moneys reckoned properly enough as sources of revenue, which are in no sense taxation (such as our post-office and telegraph net receipts), combine to baffle any but the most elaborate and lengthened calculations and explanations. Some notion of all this may be gained by reference to the above-named article in the *Edinburgh Review*. I will therefore content myself with giving side by side in round numbers the population and taxation in the three countries which most concern us:—

	Population.	Taxation.	Per head.
United Kingdom . .	32,000,000	£93,000,000	58s.
France	36,000,000	113,000,000	63s.
United States of America	39,000,000	130,000,000	66s.

N.B.—(1). The real revenue from *taxation*, properly so called, for the United Kingdom (for, of course, the *profits* made by the post-office and telegraphs must be put out of consideration), would seem to be as follows:—

Customs	£20,340,000
Inland Revenue (various branches)	40,000,000
Income tax	5,690,000
	£66,030,000
Local taxation	26,440,000
	£92,470,000

See *Statesman's Year Book* for 1875: pp. 213, 220.

(2). The sum given for France is taken from Goschen's work

may be easily fallen into and not easily detected, but on general grounds which no errors of detail can appreciably weaken or affect—our entire system of taxation has, in the course of the last generation, been so largely amended, and its amount in reference to our wealth and our population so greatly reduced,

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on local taxation, p. 122; and includes the *communal* taxation, but probably not a further sum for *departmental* expenditure, which should be included. See *Economist* for September 27th, 1873.

(3). The figures for the United States (with a trifling reduction, rendered necessary by considerations which I need not particularise) are taken from an official document—"Report of Commissioners appointed by the State of New York," dated 1871, and signed by David A. Wells and two colleagues—p. 9.

(4). Mr Baxter classes the relative wealth of several nations thus:—

Income per head.

United Kingdom .	£28	Germany .	£19
United States of America	26	Austria . .	17
France . . .	21	Russia . .	7

II.—Increasing Wealth of the Nation.

A very few figures will suffice to satisfy our minds on this score. *First*, we may refer to the remarkable calculation, signed "Surplus," which was published in the *Times* of April 12th, of this year, and appears to rest mainly on the authority of the first financial authority in the kingdom, from which it results that the average annual growth of the yield of our taxes (all due allowances for remissions and impositions made), had been as follows:—

1840—1852 . . .	£1,000,000
1852–1859 . .	1,240,000
1859—1865 . . .	1,780,000
1865—1875 . . .	2,500,000

Secondly.—The total amount of property and income assessed

that economists and statesmen are bound to change their phraseology, and reconsider their popular maxims, in regard thereto. To continue to declaim against it as either unduly heavy, or unfair in its pressure, or a stimulant to fraud, or a fetter upon commerce, has become simply an abuse of language and a misdirec-

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under the income tax has risen thus (Ireland being estimated for the first ten years) :—

1843, . . .	£220,000,000
1859, . . .	266,000,000
1868, . . .	386,000,000
1871, . . .	420,000,000
1873, . . .	453,000,000

Thus, while in the course of a quarter of a century the assessable income of the nation had nearly doubled, the taxation levied had risen only about ten millions, or twenty per cent.

Thirdly.—While it is notorious that during the same period the wages of our population have increased in a corresponding ratio with the incomes of the propertied classes, we have no means of accurately measuring this augmentation. But the following table, of the increasing consumption of imported and exciseable articles per head, will leave us little to be desired on this head :—

CONSUMPTION OF IMPORTED AND EXCISABLE ARTICLES PER HEAD OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

	1853.	1863.	1873.
Bacon, lb. . .	0·81	6·09	9·07
Butter, lb. . .	1·61	3·65	4·39
Cheese, lb. . .	1·55	2·85	4·69
Eggs, number . .	4·48	9·08	20·56
Rice, lb. . .	2·25	5·58	11·37
Sugar, lb. . .	29·57	36·01	51·56
Tea, lb. . .	2·14	2·90	4·11
Tobacco, lb. . .	1·07	1·27	1·41
Wine, gallons . .	0·25	0·35	0·56
Malt, bushels . .	1·49	1·67	1·98
Spirits, home and foreign, gal.	1·10	0·85	1·23

tion of the national mind. These statements may still have some insignificant fraction of reality about them, but it is a fraction as insignificant as can apply to any system of taxation. Watch expenditure as closely as you choose, for it may be injudicious, it may be clumsily levied, it may even be wasteful and misapplied; but cease to denounce it as oppressive or extreme. It is notoriously no more than a nation so

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INCIDENCE OF TAXATION.

This is a matter peculiarly difficult to ascertain with any precision. Perhaps the best plan is to place side by side the results of three careful calculations, the one my own, the two others by Mr Baxter and Mr L. Levi, both statisticians of eminence. (See "Political Problems," p. 309.)

1869.	Taxation per head.		Taxation in proportion to Income.	
	Propertied classes.	Proletariat.	Propertied classes.	Proletariat.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
Greg, . .	8 3 0	1 6 0	14 per cent.	9 per cent.
Baxter, .	7 0 0	1 8 3	10½ „	7 „
Levi, . .	6 5 0	1 2 0	14 „	5½ „
Average, .	7 2 8	1 5 5	13 „	7 „

That is, the classes who possess the property, as compared with the working classes, pay *six* times as much per head, and nearly twice as much in proportion to income. The proportion will, of course, vary according to the severity of the income tax in each year. Since the above calculations were made, the tea duty has been reduced, and the sugar duty repealed. On the other hand, the income tax has been reduced; so that probably the comparison has not been much affected.

extraordinarily—perhaps mischievously[1]—wealthy can bear with ease. If, for the sake of words, you insist upon calling our actual amount of revenue a burden on the people, add to your now pedantic phraseology that there are far heavier burdens pressing upon them from which the fitting use of that revenue would relieve them; that the money of the nation is entrusted to the Governmcnt not to be spent as sparingly, but as beneficially and as efficiently as possible; and that it is disreputable and scandalous to forego any great object, or to decline any manifest improvement, or to shirk any international obligation, on the plea that we cannot afford the outlay, because that plea is simply an untruth. We are the richest nation on the earth, and yet we submit to be told daily by our orators in Parliament that we are not rich enough to discharge our duties, or to mend our social evils,

[1] I consider that wealth may be mischievous to a nation, as history has shown ere now, when it comes upon it suddenly, inordinately, or as the result of conquest or mineral discoveries and not of industry; and when, therefore, its immediate and perhaps only consequence is a vast outburst of luxury—an increase in the consumption of perishable commodities which yields no added dignity to life, and no extended powers of usefulness, and whose main results are felt in a great inflation of prices and an enhanced system of expenditure, which together render life difficult to that portion (the large residue) of the community whose share in the increased riches of the nation has not been proportionate. When the influx of wealth is rapid, the production of needed articles, individual or family, rarely keeps pace with consumption, nor does the *character* of expenditure improve with the augmentation of its amount. Has not this been the case of late years in England?

or avert our coming perils.[1] We find ourselves with millions of surplus revenue when our annual budget is unveiled to us—last year it was six millions—yet our constant question is not, "What best can we do with it?" but, "To what clamorous interest or class shall we give it away?" The budget-night is a scramble for alms, not an honourable competition for the means of supplying a grievous public need, or reaching a beneficial achievement. Even those among our legislators who still condescend to take lessons from the wisdom of Scripture, in place of bandying its anathemas, seem to forget that praise and reward were lavished on the administrators who used their five talents and their ten in active operations, while only scorn and penalty were bestowed upon the timid and

[1] It is true the argument is not put forward in this naked form: shallow arguments seldom are, lest their fallacy should be too easily detected. But all who have had much opportunity of watching ministerial proceedings know too well the pressure that is put upon every department to cut down its estimates as low as possible; the earnest, and often peremptory remonstrances of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has to provide the funds, with his colleagues, who have to spend them; the rivalry between successive ministries as to which shall ask least money from the country rather than as to which shall lay out its money most profitably; and the perpetual recurrence of the resistless plea—"Oh! that is all very true, but we dare not dream of naming such a figure; it would be simple madness; the House of Commons would not listen to it for a moment. What! present heavier estimates than our predecessors!" Mr Gladstone proposes to remit five millions of taxation. Sir Stafford Northcote never dreams of saying, "If you will trust me, I will spend that five millions so that it shall be worth ten to the nation." He simply wins popularity at the outset by promising to remit six.

idle minister who could give no better account of the funds entrusted to him, than that he had wrapped them up in a napkin, and held them ready for remission.

It will be asked, "What then are these items of public expenditure which ought to be enlarged before we think of any further remission of taxation? What are the obligations we are ever seeking to evade on the ground of poverty, in place of pressing to meet them with liberality out of the abundance of our overflowing wealth? What the preparations for the future claims of less happy years that we ought to be

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We are all familiar with the perennial plea of the Cobden School of economists, "It is absolutely essential to reduce every vote of the larger departments as a rule, however plausible the grounds they make out for its inflation. This is practically the only way of enforcing moderation in the public expenditure. *We simply cannot trust the Government with money;* it is impossible to check the outlay in detail; ministers themselves cannot do it; if they have the millions, their subordinates will be certain to contrive to spend them. The only real way of saving is to say to ministers, 'You shall have no more than so much wherewith to carry on the State machine, whatever be your exigencies or your aims; *and you must make that sum do.*'" I appeal to the recollection of my readers whether this has not been the constant language of the Manchester School, whether in or out of power; and I appeal to their good sense whether any language could be more undignified or helpless. "These schoolboys who rule us—whom we select to rule us—must be kept on short allowance; cash slips through the fingers of all of them; empty purses are the only guarantees against waste; fifteen millions are probably wanted for the army or the navy, though the Cabinet dare only ask for twelve; let us vote them no more than ten, and they will contrive to spin it out, and leave us scarcely weaker or less defensible as the result." And this passes for policy and saving!

eager to make in these years of fat and teeming prosperity? What those costly but profitable lines of liberal outlay which will repay us a thousand-fold? What, finally, especially those unsupplied wants, those urgent needs which lie as burdens on the nation far heavier than any impost we could name?" I have no intention of drawing out a complete programme, but will content myself with a few suggestions.

I.—The State of the Army.

My readers need not be afraid lest I should drag them through the discussions on this topic, both in Parliament and in the press, which have wearied us from year to year, in which pictures the most irreconcilable were drawn by equally qualified members of the Government and the Opposition, and the most contradictory opinions confidently bandied about between very able civilians and very respectable military authorities. I will confine myself to facts, as to which little discrepancy appears to exist among those qualified to speak, most of which, indeed, might be inferred beforehand, and the conclusions pointed at by which are too obvious to need elaborate argument. And for the sake at once of brevity and lucidity, instead of complicating my text with references and quotations, I will compress into a note a sufficient number of the authorities on which I rely for confirmation.[1]

[1] In the debate which took place in the course of May, in the two Houses of Parliament, we find the following admissions from quarters where such admissions mean much, and may be taken

It is admitted, then, on all hands, that the state of the army is far from satisfactory, and that, whether painted *en beau* by the Ins or *en noir* by the Outs, whether its condition be owing to a bad system or to

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without discount. The recruits, the Duke of Cambridge allowed, are too young. "No doubt," the Duke said, "it would be better to have no recruits under twenty. I should be delighted to find that every recruit who entered the service was of that age. . . . But how are we to know a young man's age? We are obliged to take his word for it, and sometimes he may say he is twenty when he is only seventeen. I repeat that I should prefer men of twenty, but it is impossible to get them at that age. At twenty a young fellow has become a seasoned man, who has entered upon his career in life, and *if he is at all a good workman or a good labourer, he will not come into the army, whereas a boy of eighteen or nineteen, who has not yet taken his position in life, you can enlist.*" In other words, the army can compete successfully with the labour-market for what, in the Duke's view, are the less desirable class of recruits, but not for the more desirable. Indeed he said as much in plain words. The real difficulty, he avowed, "is the state of the labour-market." "*That is the difficulty, and, unless you can get over it, you cannot have an army such as we should wish to see, or a reserve worthy the name of a reserve;* for the reserve at present, is much more on paper than in reality." And again, in almost the very last words of his speech, the Commander-in-Chief said—"I repeat, if you wish to keep up the army, and to have short service, *you must look to the labour-market, and pay your men accordingly.*"

Lord Cardwell, who rose next, expressed his "entire agreement" with the Duke's concluding observations. Conscription, as the Commander-in-Chief had said, was not to be thought of, and the question therefore resolved itself into a "matter of estimate." "*If you would rather see full battalions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer must have a fuller estimate.*" Lord Cardwell added, that "in time of peace neither the present Government nor any other *would venture to submit largely-increased estimates to the House of Commons.*"

The Secretary-at-War told the House plainly his view of the

the stinginess which has ruined a good system, it is such as, but for our navy and our "silver strip of sea," would not content the country for an hour. It is equally beyond question that our recruiting system is

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case :—"Twenty per cent. of our recruits," he said, "will never become efficient soldiers at all; other twenty per cent. are not at present efficient soldiers, but will or MAY *in process of time become so.*"

Medical Inspectors of the Army—Dr Adams, Dr Cameron, and others, say :—"A deplorable deterioration has taken place in the quality of the rank and file in the last few years." "I must candidly assert that the physique of our infantry is not up to the standard of our race, and unless remedial measures be adopted at once, it will fall lower and lower." "We are enlisting the very scum of society."

The Commander-in-Chief, at the Lord Mayor's dinner, said : —"It is impossible to keep the army up unless you pay for it. And the question is, are you prepared to pay what is necessary? I am convinced you are, and that the reason you receive this toast so well is because you know perfectly that by contributing the sums essential to keep the services efficient, you are caring more effectually for your own interests than in any other way you could devise. This is really the view which we must take. It is my duty, and the duty of those who have to work with me, to manipulate the article when we have got it; and it is for you, the members of Parliament who surround me, and for the constituencies, to enable us to have the means of producing a good result. Unless you give us those means liberally, it is impossible we can attain efficiency. But all that requires money, and without money we cannot attain the object in view. Then, again, I am constantly hearing of economy and efficiency. Well, I think I am a most economical man in the right direction. I do not understand how it is that when we economise we are supposed to have become more efficient. I never have been able to see how efficiency was to be attained unless you spend money. I believe, if it were fairly and fully put by members to their constituents, they would enable you to be generous. But there ought to be no mistake about it; we ought to speak out freely, as I have en-

most disappointing in its results; that our enlistments are deplorably too few, and our desertions shamefully too many; that, in short, for some reason or other, the service, whatever changes we now make in it, is not attractive to the population; that we do not get the sort of men we want and that we used to get; and that, as the special point of all, we are forced to be content with the *scum* instead of the *élite* (physically) of the masses; with the weakened or diseased riff-raff

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deavoured to do to the best of my ability, in placing this question in a common-sense way before my fellow-citizens in this great metropolis, wherever I have had the opportunity of speaking on this subject."

The rejections out of the recruits offering themselves have risen, in the last thirty years, from 30 to 44 per cent., according to one account. According to a more favourable one, they are now one in three. "Why," asks Captain Horne, "are the rejections so numerous? Because we are compelled now, and have always been compelled in emergencies, to enlist largely from town recruits of immature age." In 1872, 31 per cent. of the recruits were enlisted in London, and 52 per cent. in five other largest towns. In the same year, 27 in every 1000 were under seventeen years of age, and 582 under twenty years of age. The ratio of deserters to recruits has never, since the earliest years of this century, been so high as now: it was over 30 per cent. in 1872. According to Mr Holms, from official estimates, the average number of recruits wanted annually is 32,449; the average number obtained has scarcely exceeded 20,000. Yet it is absurd to argue that sufficient numbers cannot be obtained by fitting inducements. There is no difficulty whatever in obtaining an adequate supply of men of the fitting age (twenty-one and upwards) for the Police force (43,000 men), nor by the lower branches of the Civil Service (the Customs, Excise, &c.), nor by the great Railway Companies, whose servants on weekly pay equal in numbers our home army. (See Holm's "British Army," pp. 73, 74.)

of the towns instead of the hardy rustic of the country; with boys instead of men ; with youths of 17 instead of 20 ; that is, with fellows who *may* become good soldiers in two or three years instead of fellows who will be ready for the field in six months,—and this at an era when wars are matters of weeks instead of years. I offer no opinion as to the wisdom of short service or long service, or any of the other alterations of system recently introduced ; as a civilian, I do not feel qualified to form one ; as a pleader, having one clear point in view, I am anxious to avoid all disputable matter. The two or three essential truths which concern my argument, and which no one, I apprehend, will deny or endeavour to extenuate, are : *first*, that whereas formerly we used to be able to recruit the sort of men we wished for in the numbers we wished, we can no longer do so ; *secondly*, that we cannot do so, because we no longer offer them the same relatively equal or superior inducements—in pay, pension, treatment, &c.—compared with other claimants for their services, that we formerly did ; in a word, that we are thus beaten in the competition for suitable men by the railway contractors, engineers, iron masters, emigration agents, and other employers of labour, because we do not bid so high as those rivals ; in fine, because the State—the wealthiest of all employers of labour, since its wealth, being that of the nation, is simply inexhaustible—the one whose service would seem to have in some sort both a prior claim and a special dignity —will not offer its servants as good pay (*pay* includ-

ing remuneration and attractions of all kinds)[1] as commercial companies, private individuals, colonies, or the back States of America; because, while it might be the best paymaster, it *is* the worst. For no one doubts that if *we chose to bid high enough*, we might command as many recruits of the right sort and the right age as we desire; that, in short, if, instead of giving back our surplus to the most clamorous and pertinacious of the tax-payers, we were to allot two millions, one million, or less (say even 6d. a day extra to every one of our soldiers),[2] to dealing with our army on signally generous terms, we could *command* the labour market instead of having to make shift with its refuse; unless, indeed, our military authorities were actual idiots in their way of laying out the extra money. But what reception would a Secretary-at-War who proposed thus to raise the pay of the soldiers to the market price receive from his Chancel-

[1] Pray let it be observed that I by no means wish to give an opinion as to *which special inducement* is inadequate. It may be bounty, or daily pay, or pension, or comfortable quarters, or fitting provision for married soldiers, or decent, kindly treatment. It must somehow, however, be *something* which the army service lacks, and which the railway service, the police force, the navigators, and even the Customs, Excise, and Post-office, contrive to offer. I am inclined to believe (with Mr Holms), that the army might be made as attractive to 30,000 young men every year, with little or no increase of actual outlay, if only our military authorities, parliamentary and others, knew how. That they *could* be got there can be no doubt.

[2] Even men who agree with me and with each other in little else, agree in recommending this advance. (See Holms, p. 72. Capt. Hime's Prize Essay p. 29.)

lor of the Exchequer? On the other hand, what reception ought a ministry which shrinks from such a proposal to meet with from a country which has confided its destinies, its safety, and its fair fame to such timid and short-sighted stewards?

It is to no purpose that some writers, like Mr Holms,[1] maintain that we might make our army splendidly and adequately effective, at its present cost, by wiser management. The position may be sound, but it is irrelevant, for no man urges more strongly than Mr Holms that we do not now get or keep the quality of recruits we so imperatively need. It is futile to argue, as I have heard others do, that we ought to take the scum of the population for the army; that soldiering is the best use we can put them to; and military discipline the best school for them. Granted to a great extent;—it may be the moral and social scum that we might and ought to utilise, but not the *physical* scum; and even those we don't want till they are full grown, otherwise we cannot give them the adequate discipline they need—we cannot wait three years till they become ripe for service. The fact remains that we want a better and an older set than we get, and that we don't get them, simply because we won't pay for them. If any proofs, references, or confirmations were needed to clinch this fact, they are to be found in the two proposals that have been so vehemently urged from time to time during the last four years; one class of orators and writers

[1] "The British Army in 1875." By John Holms, M.P., p. 7.

insisting that we shall never have a decent army till we adopt conscription and the ballot, as in France; the other maintaining that our only safety lies in universal military service, as in Prussia, in passing our whole male population through the ranks.[1] I confess both propositions fill me with infinite disgust, for what do they both mean at bottom? Simply, the *press-gang revived.* "Seize your men, because you are too stingy to pay them fair wages. *Force* them to

[1] The Royal United Service Institution has just awarded its annual prize to an Essay by Capt. Hime, R.A., entitled "Universal Conscription the only answer to the Recruiting Question." His Essay is full of such military learning as bears upon the subject, but we cannot praise its logic or adopt its conclusions. Its entire argument is this: that in order to obtain the number and class of suitable recruits the country needs, you must (for the home forces at least) render the whole population liable to serve, even if you do not pass the whole population through the ranks as they reach the age of twenty—(for his "Plan," Part III., is not very clear in its summary)—BECAUSE the army as at present recruited, is growing poorer in quality year by year, as well as more costly, and BECAUSE in no other manner can you obtain the men you need, in the numbers you need, *without having to pay more than the country will ever consent to pay.* He argues (virtually), that it is cheaper to *take* men than to offer them *adequate* inducements to come;—and, like all military reasoners, in Prussia as well as here, entirely leaves out of view the indirect and incalculable cost to the country of a system which would take every young man from his art, his profession, his craft, just as he was beginning to master it, and had found his niche, for a year or two at first, and at any time when he was wanted afterwards;—thus deranging the organisation of every establishment in the country. Curiously enough, however, at p. 29, he writes:—"But, *in the meantime*, you must go into the labour market, and say, 'If you won't come for the pay and pension we offer, what will you come for?'—and give it them." Precisely my argument—not only for "the meantime," but for all times.

serve you, because you think it too costly to *induce* them." And this, you fancy, would be the more economical measure of the two! and you disguise its monstrous injustice and oppression — some of you, under the wretched screen of the ballot, which is leaving the incidence of the iniquity to chance, or throwing it on Providence; others under the scarcely less transparent curtain of universal service,—which, if purchasable exemptions were forbidden, would be impossible and extravagant, and if they were allowed, would be simply a more wasteful and irregular system of recruiting. Would you dare—would you even propose—to fix an unremunerating rate of salary for your civil servants, and then collect them by conscription? And, if not, why should you recommend such a system for the military service of the State?

II.—The Administration of Justice.

It will be admitted on all hands—and it would be a waste of time to argue the point—that the most important and imperative duty of the State, after providing for the safety and independence of the country, is to secure the prompt, efficient, and pure administration of justice to all its subjects. That justice should not be over-costly, is of signal consequence also; but is not half so essential as that it should be *accessible*, equally reliable for rich and poor, and, in fact, never impeded or denied, directly or indirectly; that every man who is wronged should have a remedy, easy and at hand; that every crime should be promptly and

adequately punished; and that a legitimate litigant should be able to obtain a conclusive decision to his lawsuit; that no man should have to endure a wrong, because it is so tedious and costly to get righted; or, dread an appeal to the law, as a worse calamity than submission to a fraud or an oppression. A Government which does not secure this full and ready justice to its people clearly fails in one of its most solemn and urgent obligations; if it fails because the discharge of this obligation would cost money, the excuse would seem only to add to the guilt of the failure; and if, having sufficient funds in hand, it prefers to use that money in purchasing popularity by remission of taxation, rather than in doing justice by strengthening the staff appointed to administer the law, it is difficult to characterise, in moderate language, the degree or the nature of its laches. Now, that the State in England is, and has long been, habitually guilty of this grave iniquity, is only too notorious; and the expense, cruelty, and injustice thus inflicted on the community is known to be enormous and incalculable, but unluckily does not admit of being laid before the public in precise or provable figures.

The state of affairs referred to has been denounced as a scandal for more than a generation, yet it exists as a scandal still, and, probably, a scandal almost unmitigated in its essential points. Many attempts have been made to remedy it, but none have been effectual, and few have been actually carried into operation. No one denies the allegations, yet the facts adduced are of

the most astounding order. I enter into no discussion as to the remedy: it would be pure impertinence in me even to pretend to an opinion on the subject. I only know that the present judges cannot, by any diligence, get through their ever-increasing business, far less overtake arrears. I know that, under the existing system, this inadequate judicial staff, instead of sitting continuously—and what institutions should be constantly open and in action, if not courts of justice?—suspend operations for several months in the year in the metropolis, and hold assizes only twice or three times a year in the provinces. The appellate system, too, is a source of indescribable oppression. The impossibility of getting through the work has led to the use of the less occupied Queen's counsel to supplement the judges in trying causes at assizes; and to a far worse evil—the practice of almost *forcing* parties (by the most urgent advice from the bench) to submit their disputes to arbitration—*i.e.*, to a most costly and unsatisfactory method of decision.[1] The hardest source of cruelty of all upon the suitors is the *remanets*—*i.e.*, the cases which are postponed from session to session, simply because the judges have not time to hear them. They have therefore to be left over till another assize or another time; and what this means, in the way of added fees, renewed expenses for the journeys and maintenance of witnesses, and other items of outlay, may be imagined by many of us, but

[1] See "Statistics of the Courts of Justice," &c., by F. H. Janson, Esq., read before the Statistical Society, Feb., 1874.

can be known only in its full bitterness by the unhappy victims. Yet, what was told us a few weeks ago by a late law officer of the Crown? Sir H. James's speech on the Judicature Bill of last Session says :—

"It seemed to him most unadvisable to bring the legal business of the country to a dead-lock by reducing the number of those judges. *The* 15 *judges could not perform the duties which now devolved upon them.* The trials of heavy commercial causes took place only at short sittings held three times a year, and the present state of things was in consequence a scandal to the country. The number of *remanets*, some of which had been standing for two years, was, in the Court of Queen's Bench, 186 ; in the Court of Exchequer, 92 ; and in the Court of Common Pleas, 37 ; and to these there had just been added 108, 111, and 112 new causes in those three courts respectively. The circuits required 14 judges, and there must be one judge sitting in chambers ; consequently there was no provision made for the Central Criminal Court, or for cases of indisposition, and it would be impossible, under the Bill, to have continuous sittings in London during the circuits."

Two other quotations from the Law Reports, given in the *Times*, will suffice for illustrations :—

"EXCHEQUER CHAMBER,
"Dec. 5, 1871.

"BUSINESS OF THE COURT.

"Mr Justice Mellor said there were other judgments to be delivered, but on account of the engagements of the judges, several of them having to go the Winter Circuit, and his own Court being short-handed, the Court had been unable to prepare their judgments in the other cases, and they must therefore stand over until February.

"Mr Justice Willes announced that, from a similar cause, this Court must suspend its sittings, and could not hear any of the cases of error from the Court of Exchequer, which, therefore, must stand over until February. Thus the Court was leaving

the greater part of its business undisposed of, and most of the cases have been pending two or three years.

"From the same cause, only two out of the eight cases in error from the Common Pleas were heard at this sittings, and the other six stand over."

Again—

"COURT OF ERROR IN THE EXCHEQUER CHAMBER,

"Nov. 30, 1872.

"(Sittings in Error from the Court of Exchequer, before the Lord Chief Justice, Mr Justice Blackburn, Mr Justice Keating, Mr Justice Denman, and Mr Justice Archibald.)

"The Court, as thus constituted, sat to take cases in error from the Court of Exchequer, of which there were 18—enough to occupy the Court for two or three weeks, especially as many of them are cases of great weight. Three days only, however, could be appointed, consistently with the other probable demands upon the time of the judges as judges of ordinary or first instance jurisdiction; and the Lord Chief Justice, upon the judges taking their seats, had to announce that it was found it would be impossible to sit on Monday, owing to the Winter Circuits, so that the sittings will be curtailed to a single day, scarcely sufficient to dispose of one case. The consequence was that all the cases but the first one or two had to stand over until after next Term. Before taking any of the new cases, judgment was delivered in one which had stood over for consideration from the last sittings."

Now, I have not a word to say as to the variety of remedies which have been suggested during the discussions of the last two sessions. Legal doctors differ too much to make it decent for an unprofessional layman to offer an opinion. Nor is it necessary. All that is essential to my argument stands out above all controversy—viz., that all these ruinous *remanets* and enforced arbitrations, which are the disgrace and opprobrium of our system, and so grievous a cruelty

to our suitors, might have been avoided had there been a timely addition to the number of our judges, and had those judges sat *de die in diem* both at assizes, in appeal courts, and in courts of first instance —as they would have done had they been numerous enough and adequately paid ; and yet that, session after session and parliament after parliament, for a generation back or more, successive Governments have gone on remitting millions upon millions of surplus revenue in preference to rectifying, by a reasonable expenditure, this grievous, scandalous, and admitted wrong. I know few more flagrant examples of want of moral courage, or want of sense of the comparative importance of measures,—or of both combined.

III.—Irish National Education.

We shall not attempt to guide our readers through the utterly irreconcilable statistics on the subject of the condition and efficiency of the Primary Schools in Ireland which were laid before the House of Commons in the early August debates by official and opposition speakers; by the Chief Secretary on the one side, and Mr Lyon Playfair and Mr O'Reilly on the other; nor shall we quote in any detail from the voluminous report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry. On this topic, as throughout this paper, we shall prefer to confine ourselves to data which are not, or scarcely, disputed, so that if any persons dissent from our general conclusions, their controversy with us shall concern only our logic and our inferences, and not at

all our premisses. It will not, then, we apprehend, be disputed that among the most desirable objects which Government can aim at should be a thoroughly good education for the Irish people, conducted as far as practicable by well-qualified and well-disposed instructors; that such a system, fairly, zealously, and liberally followed out for a generation ought to have gone far towards solving the eternal "Irish difficulty;" and that almost any number of millions successfully spent in bringing about such a result would be public money laid out to no ordinary profit. Theoretically, indeed, this proposition has been avowed and reavowed for the last forty years, by every political party, whether in or out of office. It will be admitted, further, that the teachers appointed to train the youthful intellects of the Irish people, and sway their sentiments at the most impressible ages, ought to be as well qualified as can be found; so well treated as to make them almost inevitably contented, and the spreaders of content around them; and so comfortable as, by the nature of things, to be earnest friends of the system and the connection to which they owed their comfort. So far there can surely be no difference of opinion.

Yet it is admitted with almost equal unanimity—for controversy on the matter only deals with figures and details of degree—that the instruction given in the primary, and so-called "national" schools of Ireland, is defective in the extreme; inefficient, when compared, not by an ideal standard, but by the imper-

fect practical ones of England ;—that only a portion of the teachers are even nominally trained for their occupation, and that the training they have had is, for the most part, ostentatiously inadequate ;—that their salaries are wretchedly scanty, and residence for them rarely provided, and when provided sadly insufficient. No one disputes these things : scarcely any one denies either that, as a natural consequence, these teachers are (as a rule, and notoriously) disaffected, and propagators of disaffection—in fact, are too often to be ranked among the worst foes of England, in place of being her fastest friends.[1]

The comparison, according to Mr O'Reilly, gives as the entire average income of the Irish national school teachers £43, against £103 in England, and £110 in

[1] The following is the summing up of the *Spectator:* "For several years the National School Teachers had been agitating for an increase of salary, and their case is simply irresistible. They are paid at a lower rate than London scavengers ; with exceptions not deserving notice, they are without residences ; and they receive no pension in old age. They have, therefore, neither the present means of saving, nor a future provision, and consequently they have only the workhouse to look forward to as the reward of a lifetime of faithful service. Leaving common justice and right feeling entirely out of the question, it is evident that ordinary prudence would hasten to redress the grievances of the teachers. The wretchedness of their condition closes the profession against competently qualified persons, and necessarily renders the schools inefficient. Nor are the political consequences less disastrous. Every one can see the folly of uniting great powers with physical wretchedness, and that is what is done in the case of those teachers. After the priests, they exercise the greatest influence over the minds of the Irish people, and they are so starved, that discontent and disaffection are inevitable results."

Scotland; and *one* training school in Ireland, against *five* in Scotland, and *thirty* in England. The same authority says that last year, out of 9,960 teachers in the Irish primary schools, only 3,842, or little more than one-third, had been trained. The Royal Commission gives (1870) fuller and rather different figures, but none at all invalidating the general conclusion: the result is, that taking all sects into account, about half the male teachers, and two-thirds of the female, are untrained.

The report gives the salaries of the *male* teachers as ranging for trained from £18 to £52, and for untrained from £18 to £44; *female* from £16 to £30 and £40—pay which the Commissioners declare insufficient for securing the needed character and talent. Out of 5,265 schools, only 1,430 have free residences; the Commissioners recommend that they should be attached to all. The inadequacy of the proposals of Sir M. Hicks Beach on moving the relative vote in August last to meet those recommendations on the requirements of the case, is obvious at a glance. I fully admit the force of collateral considerations, and the objections to an increase of grant in any form which would have the effect of fostering the inveterate tendency of the Irish to live on English liberality, and shut their own purses. I am merely concerned to point out that here we have a third instance in which a portion of the surplus funds that have been remitted to the tax-payers during the last forty years might have wrought a national good, now, perhaps, out of

our reach for ever. An additional quarter of a million yearly, imperceptible to the English contributor to whom it was remitted, would have won the hearts of the Irish schoolmasters, to whom it was denied.

IV.—Reduction of the National Debt.

This question has been so often, so recently, and sometimes so exhaustively treated, and the ablest statesmen and writers are so nearly in accord as to the principle involved, however they may differ as to the special measures by which that principle should be carried into operation, that a very few words of reminder are all that are necessary here. Our National Debt fluctuates about £800,000,000. It reached £900,000,000 at the peace of 1815. Thirty-nine years of peace reduced it to £800,000,000. The Crimean war, which lasted two years, added £30,000,000. Every war, every great and unexpected claim—negro emancipation, the Irish famine, the Crimean expedition, the fortifications voted in 1865, the purchase of the telegraphs in 1869—is met wholly or in part by loans, and, as we well know, will always be; and, as most of us admit, ought to be so; and for that very reason large reductions of the debt (thus inevitably and periodically augmented) ought to be held one of the first and most solemn obligations in every year of prosperity and peace. Hitherto, in spite of a long cycle of such prosperity, and an enormous increase in the wealth of the nation, we have only nibbled at such reductions. We have no

right to count on the continuance of such prosperity or such increase; we have many reasons to count on its diminution or cessation; intimations to this effect have been sounded in the people's ears of late, both by writers and statesmen with every claim to be listened to; and almost every one whose reputation entitles him to a hearing has in turn sounded the note of warning. We have no right to leave such an enormous burden on our posterity, who may most probably be far less able than ourselves to bear it. What is oppressive to us may be simply ruinous to them. It is scarcely honest—scarcely safe—to borrow for emergencies unless we repay *proportionally* in ordinary years. And, in fine, few will contest our conclusion that to remit taxation whenever there is a surplus—or even to consider that we have a surplus till a large sum has been set aside to pay off the debt—is a misappropriation approaching to iniquity.[1] The practical recognition of this truth by Sir Stafford Northcote, though inadequate, is worthy of all appreciation.

V.—Sanitary Measures.

This subject has been so fully discussed, has occupied public attention for so many years, and has given rise to so much local and general legislation, more or less abortive, more or less inadequate, that I need drag

[1] Perhaps I may venture to refer for particulars to "Rocks Ahead," chap. ii., "the Economic Rock." (See also Mr Gladstone's Budget Speech, 1866; and J. S. Mill's speech in the House of Commons, April 17th, same year. Also Dudley Baxter's "National Debts.")

my readers through no details. *Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas,* said Mr Disraeli a year or two ago. It is admitted that nowhere in this country do our hygienic arrangements even approach perfection. It has been all but proved, and is, I believe, not denied, that in the United Kingdom 200,000 deaths out of 600,000 may be traced to preventible causes, and that these represent at least three times the number of cases of impaired health and spoiled life. It is felt, too, that as our population increases and towns extend, the mischief arising from neglected, misunderstood, or inadequate sanitation is growing serious and menacing to a hitherto unconceived degree. A good deal has been done, as we all know, not always wisely; but what remains to be done assumes year by year larger and wider dimensions. It is not very certain that we are altogether on the right tack; it is quite certain that the task before us presents appalling difficulties, and will involve enormous cost.[1] It has been determined that a sound and complete system of sewerage and drainage is essential, and must somehow be provided for every town and city; and towns and cities are growing up all round us, and swelling yearly as we watch them. The Pollution of Rivers Act, which was introduced last session, and will be re-introduced and probably carried next year, first began to open

[1] The main drainage of the metropolis, from first to last, is estimated to cost about five millions; and if, as is probable, the proposal to supply London with pure water from Westmoreland, or the Bala district in Wales, be renewed, we must prepare for an outlay of many mi ions more.

our eyes to the tremendous task before us—a task which can scarcely be *accomplished*, it is supposed, for less than one hundred millions—a sum which can scarcely be added to our already vast local taxation. That Act provides, in effect, that while our sewerage system shall be universalized and perfected, God Almighty's sewers, our streams and rivers, "for that end made and provided," shall no longer be used for that purpose; that our rubbish, manufacturing refuse, and household *excrementa* shall no longer be turned into the natural watercourses, and so carried off into the sea, *but shall be disposed of and find depositories elsewhere.* In that last phrase lies the essence of the subject. "Elsewhere!" *Where?* Concentrate your attention for a moment on the valley of the Thames alone. Every one of the numberless towns, large and small, which make that valley one vast hive of life, must no longer use its grand river as an outlet—must do as London has done[1]—must find some issue, more or less distant, where, possibly miles off, it may convey its inevitable filth; and that issue must be unoccupied land—wastes, bogs, marshes, &c.—away from other habitations, where it shall be out of the reach of poisoning air or water for other human beings, present or future. In other words, the *excrementa* of some ten or fifteen millions which has hitherto, for the most part, floated away to the ocean, shall be retained in the country, and concentrated into what *may*

[1] And every town has not, like London, Barking Marshes and the sea at its service.

become centres of pestilence. It may be questioned whether this is wise, whether it is possible, whether it is based upon sound scientific or engineering doctrine.[1] What cannot be questioned, and what alone concerns my present purpose, is, that somehow or other the end must be attained if it be attainable; that scheme after scheme will be tried; that any scheme—be it hundreds of miles of piping, the purchase and consecration of thousands of acres, or the erection of elaborate machinery for pumping and deodorizing—will necessitate outlay on an enormous scale, which means rates by the million or borrowing by the million; and that, with such a prospect in view, giving back surpluses, neglecting to hoard surpluses, remitting one shilling of established taxation (now that our taxation is so easy and so light, and, in the main, so equitable), would appear to be a grievous error and a curious want of foresight,—needing, but scarcely likely to obtain, justification.

VI.—Relief of Local Taxation.

I have no intention of entering into the question of the degree or the mode in which local rates ought to be relieved at the expense of the imperial revenue;

[1] Even while I write, the town of Richmond has gone into court to prove that it is not *possible* for it to carry out the requirements of the law; and has adduced the declarations of very high engineering authorities in support of the plea—authorities which affirm that the whole scheme and theory of the actual system will have in a very few years to be reconsidered, and probably abandoned.

but that some such relief should be given, has been, I think, a conclusion forced upon most minds by the discussions of the last few years. The Conservative party have long urged this principle upon Parliament, though without tracing out a plan which approved itself to the public mind. Mr Goschen, when at the head of the Local Government Board, collected and published an enormous mass of information bearing on the subject; and in the name of the Liberal party conceded the principle, and as a sort of empiric and interim step, suggested that the house tax, which yields about a million, should be set aside to meet the immediate claims. But the proposal satisfied no one, and the matter was felt to demand bolder and more systematic handling. Very recently, Sir Baldwyn Leighton—than whom on such a topic no one deserves better to be listened to—in his published letter to Lord Lyttelton, has insisted upon the absolute necessity, in the interests of the poor themselves, of the cessation of all outdoor relief—and no competent observer, we believe, will differ with him. To insure this great end, he recommends (and Mr Rathbone—also an authority of large experience—in the essentials, supports his proposal) that half the cost of *indoor* maintenance shall be borne by the Treasury.[1] This

[1] "If—by charging half the *indoor*, or *necessary* poor on the Treasury, which justice as much as policy demands, and through persuasion and example inculcated by different inspectors in their districts, as has already been commenced—the outdoor pauperism could be reduced to the level of the best-managed unions, the saving in money would amount to £2,000,000 a year

particular scheme may, or may not, be the best conceivable; but probably we can scarcely be wrong in assuming that in a very short period a sum not far off two millions per annum will have to be provided *ad hoc* by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who will then be less ready than at present to give back the surplus with which the natural increase of the revenue has provided him.

I think that I have now shown that there are at least six classes of measures for the public good, of a character which the imperial revenue ought to take cognizance of and cannot without blame neglect, funds for which should be provided before the Government gives back to the nation any portion of the millions which it has confided to them to expend on its behalf, in its service, for its safety, and in discharge of its obligations formal or implied. There may be many more than six; the secular increase of the yield of existing taxation, so boldly counted upon, may any

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—indeed to nearly £3,000,000. If, in addition to this, Scotland were added to the grant from the Treasury for half the indoor maintenance, amounting to about £800,000 a year, the saving to the ratepayers would equal £4,000,000; but the saving to the poor themselves (in habits of self-reliance, &c.,) would be something like *ten times that amount*, and their improvement in moral and material welfare thereby would be quite incalculable. I look on this matter entirely from the point of view *of the amelioration of the poor;* and it is of course the consideration which would and should have the greatest weight in the House of Lords." ("Depauperisation," by Sir Baldwyn Leighton, Bart., p. 15. "Local Government and Taxation," by William Rathbone, M.P., pp. 29–36.)

year receive a startling check; new indirect taxes cannot easily be imposed; direct taxes cannot be levied on the labouring masses; large and exclusive augmentations of the income tax, which falls upon the comparatively rich, will not, we may be certain, be endured, except for sudden and rare emergencies; and, to sum up the whole, any such marked improvement in the habits and character of the working classes as we all hope for, and many of us labour for, may, ere long, sweep away from the resources of the Chancellor of the Exchequer six or seven millions of the revenue now derived from the consumption of spirituous liquors. In short, our financial resources may very probably diminish, while the claims on those resources are very certain to increase. And in the face of these considerations—all I believe indisputable—the courage of the finance minister who ventures to remit his surplus, instead of hoarding it for future use, or spending it on present and pressing needs, should, I submit, be called by another name.

VII.

THE GREAT TWIN BRETHREN.

ELABORATE parallels between eminent historical characters, after the manner of Plutarch, are out of date, and usually out of taste; but some public men still occasionally, from time to time, appear simultaneously on the stage, whose characters and careers present such singular analogies, that the most casual observer can scarcely fail to be surprised into following out the comparison. Sometimes those resemblances are confined to the mere accidents of fortune or of life, in which case the delineation of them belongs only to the "curiosities of literature." Sometimes they have no reality at all, but are of the nature of pure paradox, and then they are but the exercitations of an ingenious fancy. Sometimes they are discoverable between men whose capacities and dispositions are almost identical, but whose course of life and whose position in the world are so utterly dissimilar as to render their resemblances of character doubly curious and instructive. But occasionally the analogies we speak of pervade the whole nature of the men, and explain the secret, because they constitute the cause, of the success or failure, as well as of many of the details, of their

respective careers; and when they are seen working under external circumstances, various indeed, but not unlike, they offer about the most suggestive psychological studies which can beguile a leisure hour.

Now there are at this moment in the great arena where history is made two men who fill, and have long filled, a large space in the public eye; both unique men, both successful men, both exercising, directly or indirectly, considerable influence on the world's affairs; and who, in the fundamental features of their characters, as well as in the general outline and some of the particulars of their careers, present perhaps more points of resemblance than can be found in any of the famous parallels with which genius has made us all familiar. We mean the Emperor of the French, and the leader of the House of Commons—one, the first man in France; the other, officially and really, one of the most influential men in England.

The principal, if not the single, contrast between them renders their numerous resemblances the more remarkable. Few men can have had more dissimilar origins. Mr Disraeli is the son of a literary man in comparatively humble circumstances, much respected, but never eminent, who bequeathed to him little except his talents and his ambition. Louis Napoleon was born in the purple, the son of a king and the nephew of the greatest conqueror and military genius the earth has seen since Cæsar. Louis Napoleon, in

spite of the adverse surroundings of his youth, had everything to feed and foster that confident anticipation of the ultimate grandeur of his destiny which, as we know, he never lost, and which helped so largely to realise itself. Mr Disraeli had nothing to inspire the conviction of his future greatness beyond his innate consciousness of power and resolution.

Both come of a different stock from the nation they have been called to govern; and this difference, which we believe to have been a great assistance to the Frenchman, has constantly aggravated the difficulties of the Englishman. Without even glancing at rumours and surmises, which, having no consistency and being capable of no proof, it would be worse than idle to introduce into our thesis, we need only remember that the Emperor's father, like his uncle, was a Corsican, and therefore less French than Italian; and from his Italian blood he probably derives much of that concentration and power of silence and reserve which, whether it be really profundity or not, at least produces the impression of profundity on the volatile and excited people over whom he has attained so strange a sway. No one who has studied the biographies of the subtle, patient, impassive, daring Italian statesmen of the palmy days of the Peninsula, can fail to be struck with the family resemblance both to each other and to the present Emperor. His mother, too, was not French but West Indian. [It is curious to note, in passing, that three of the most eminent statesmen who at various times have ruled France,

and largely modified her destinies, besides the two Napoleons, have been of foreign origin and birth, Mazarin was Italian, and Neckar and Guizot were both Genevese.] Mr Disraeli, though born in England, as Louis Napoleon was born in France, has nothing English about him beyond that unimportant local accident. Jewish by descent and feature, and belonging in every fibre to that old Caucasian race which he has so pertinaciously set himself to glorify, he is devoid of the peculiar British instincts and sympathies, so essential to a leader who has to govern Englishmen by persuasion and allurement, and not by authority. It is impossible to watch him or his proceedings, or his countenance even, in the House of Commons during long debates and on critical occasions, without perceiving how thoroughly he is *au fond* out of harmony with his followers, and without recognising in this want of sympathy and perception the cause of many of his blunders. His deficiencies and his superiorities alike stand in his way with the party it is his singular fate to lead, and to lead to a great degree against their will; his subtlety, his inveterate love of mystery and intrigue, his elaborate and tortuous ingenuity, are precisely the qualities most alien from the taste and comprehension of the country gentlemen of England, who do not appreciate clever craft, and are revolted by want of openness and daring. They, as a rule, like all men whose *morale* is higher and more wakeful than their intelligence, think more of means than of ends, or at least feel more acutely

about them ; and they are in consequence perpetually offended by the tactics of a leader who by nature prefers stratagem to force, and who, while as tenacious of his purposes as his Gallic analogue, is almost as unscrupulous in reference to the paths and measures by which he would achieve them.

Both men from the outset *believed in themselves*—a mighty means and usually a sure augury of success. They believed in themselves when no one else did, and when there was no reason why any one else should. There is something touching and worthy of reverence in this unswerving faith, founded no doubt on a consciousness which cannot be imparted, but which, on the other hand, cannot be shaken or reasoned away. Mr Disraeli kept to it through years of obscurity and failure—Louis Napoleon through years of exile and imprisonment. The conviction enabled them to set their aim steadily in view in very early youth, to shape their course deliberately towards it, to labour hard and appropriately for it, and to suffer nothing to beguile them from it.

"All my life long," says Philip von Artevelde—

> "I have beheld with most respect the man
> Who knew himself, and knew the ways before him,
> And from among them chose considerately,
> With a clear foresight, not a blindfold courage ;
> And, having chosen, with a steadfast mind
> Pursued his purposes. I trained myself
> To take my place in high or low estate,
> As one of that small order of mankind."

Louis Napoleon early announced and never doubted

that he would recover the imperial throne of France. It is said that when Mr Disraeli applied to Lord Melbourne for employment, and was offered the post of Private Secretary, he declined it as below the pretensions of a man who had made up his mind sooner or later to be Prime Minister of England, and assigned this as his reason, to the astonished nobleman in question. Those, moreover, who read "Vivian Grey," the first production of Mr Disraeli's fertile pen (published, we believe, when he was barely of age), will be both amused and surprised to see how early and distinctly his ambitious schemes were sketched out, and how closely they have been pursued and realised.

Both began their public careers in a direction almost —in appearance, at least—diametrically opposite to their ultimate position. Louis Napoleon began as a *Carbonaro* and conspirator, and narrowly escaped the fate which terminated the course of his elder brother and removed at least one rival out of his way. Mr Disraeli began life as a romantic novelist—almost a rhapsodist; the actual leader of the Tory party wished to enter Parliament as a Radical under the auspices of Joseph Hume. Both inaugurated their race of wonderful triumphs with almost as wonderful fiascoes, —and fiascoes, curiously enough, of precisely the same character. Mr Disraeli published some astounding *stuff*; rubbish it was not, for there was a strange wild vigour about everything he wrote which redeems it from contempt, though by no means from ridicule; but there was a ludicrous amount of rhodomontade in

some of his productions which, had critics not been strangely merciful, or their patient singularly pachydermatous, might well have extinguished the ambitious *littérateur* for ever. His début in Parliament, too, was a marvel of false taste and bombast, utterly unsuited to such an arena; and as the House at last entirely refused to listen to his rhetorical display, the discomfited but not disheartened orator sat down, declaring that those who would not hear him then should hear him soon. Such, at least, is the tradition, and the prophecy has been amply fulfilled. But the next time Mr Disraeli addressed the House he had profited by experience, and adopted a wholly different style from his earlier attempt, viz., that personal, acid, epigrammatic manner of which he has since shown himself so consummate a master. Louis Napoleon's blunders, as Mr Bright the other evening said of Mr Gladstone's moderation, "are known unto all men." The tame eagle and the pistolled gendarme at Boulogne, the feeble and futile *attentat* at Strasbourg, the bombastic proclamations which accompanied these ambitious failures, and the first address to the French people in 1848, appeared to indicate a mind altogether extravagant and unsound, unable to measure chances or to adapt means to ends; and if the Emperor's career had terminated there, no feeling save that of contempt could have been associated with the memory of one who now, after the lapse of twenty years, is universally recognised as nearly the ablest and quite the most remarkable statesman of the age. This in-

sensibility to failure which is common to the two men —this want of feeling, or of seeming to feel, the mortification and ridicule attending it—this admirable capacity of drawing from each error and defeat its practical instruction, and ignoring or despising its mere personal annoyance—constitute of themselves a power so rare and so efficient as almost to reach to the dignity of genius, and beyond all question have been among the chief causes of the success of both careers. Both turned to the best account, the one his period of imprisonment, the other that of his enforced obscurity; and a comparison between the "Vivian Grey" and the "Coningsby" of the novelist, and between the Strasbourg *attentat* and the December *coup d'état* of the political adventurer, will give us the measure of the growth of the intellectual stature of the two in the respective intervals between their several achievements.

Passing over a few minor coincidences,—such as that both men, though not built in the mould which is popularly supposed to fascinate the sex, owed the first and most essential steps of their success to women; that both, though eminently men of action, have been voluminous, varied, and ambitious authors; and that the utterance of both, whether in speeches or in books, has been peculiarly distinguished, and will be exclusively remembered, by *phrases* of brilliant and epigrammatic incisiveness,—we go on to notice that in many most characteristic and fundamental features, their dispositions are as similar as their careers. Both

are singularly patient and persistent—pertinacious in their purposes, flexible in their measures; knowing that there are usually many ways to the same end; having learnt from written history as well as from the history of their own experience that in political life nearly everything depends upon a happy choice of times and opportunities—and religiously convinced "que tout vient à bout à qui sait attendre"—they have both known how to play a waiting game:—*Cunctando restituit rem.* The policy of both has in one and the same sense been *tentative*, that is, they have tried this door and that to the temple of grandeur and of fame, and as they found each in turn barred against them or stiff in opening, they have gone on to another, or waited till the barrier was relaxed or removed. They have in common a curious mixture of daring and of prudence; they have neither of them any sentimental or fanatical preference for plans and instruments, and paths and means; they never, or most rarely, attempt "to force the hands of Providence;" they recognise in a certain amount of difficulty, in a given measure of obstacle or resistance, an indication that victory is not intended for them *then* and *there;* they watch, that is, for divine guidance and *intimations*, as they respectively conceive such, or for what in their minds does duty for such. It is probable that neither man will ever come to ruin through obstinacy. In this respect the contrast between the Emperor of the French and his imperious uncle is most remarkable; the first Napoleon was full

of passion, and his passion wrecked his genius. He never knew when to temporise, when to give way, when to recede and acknowledge himself beaten. No intellect, so grand and so piercing, was ever so mis led or so blinded by impetuous and unconquerable pride. What was vehement *self-will* in the first Napoleon is quiet and tough *volition* in the second. The one would never yield and so was utterly crushed in the end. The other yields often, yields in time, yields with sagacity, and so usually gains his aim at last. The result has been that the nephew—with not a tithe of his uncle's genius, utterly destitute of his wonderful faculty of dazzling men's imaginations and subjugating their wills, surrounded by more powerful rivals, and fallen upon a less favourable conjuncture—has already reigned longer than his uncle. The uncle became First Consul at the end of 1799, and Emperor in 1804, and fell in 1814; that is, he was on the throne for ten years, and first magistrate of France for fourteen. The nephew was elected President in December 1848, and Emperor in December 1852; that is, he has been on the throne for fourteen years, and first magistrate for eighteen, and he is there still.

Mr Disraeli is two years older than his analogue, and has been in power almost as long. He entered Parliament for the first time in 1837, and became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Tory party in the year of the *coup d'état*, 1852; and he like the Emperor, is there still. Our readers can draw the rest of the parallel for themselves, and by

the light of the days that are passing over us now. Never have the mingled persistence and pliability of the man been more striking than in the present session.

This paper has grown to a far greater length than we designed at first, and the points of comparison are far from being exhausted. We will, however, only glance at two more. Both men are possessed with the same fundamental idea in politics, that of basing the throne of authority—despotism in the one country, Toryism in the other—on universal suffrage. Both recognise in the ignorance, the passion, the excitable prejudice, or the immovable stupidity of the masses, their natural allies, their surest supporters, the most inaccessible and indefeasible foundation of their power. Democracy at the root—autocracy at the summit. Both men, finally, we believe, are unusually free from what are ordinarily called passions—certainly from the malignant or unkindly passions. One of Louis Napoleon's bitterest antagonists surprised us, in the earlier days of his greatness, and not long after the *coup d'état*, by describing him as a singularly "inoffensive" man. "He was (he said) amiable and considerate to those about him, kind to his dependents, steady to old friends, not exactly generous or forgiving, but quite without vindictiveness—never hesitating at a necessary crime or cruelty, but at the same time never committing a superfluous one." He did not, our friend said, *like* wickedness or brutality, and *never wasted either*. Much the same thing, we believe, may be said of Mr Disraeli. We are assured

that he hates no antagonist; that he is generous and considerate to the younger members of his party and a great favourite with them; that he would promptly and without mercy crush an enemy in his way, but never one out of his way, simply because he was an enemy, and that he would find little difficulty in taking his most inveterate foe by the hand and acting cordially with him if the object he had in view dictated this course of conduct.

VIII.

IS THE POPULAR JUDGMENT IN POLITICS MORE JUST THAN THAT OF THE HIGHER ORDERS?

Contributed to a discussion on this subject in the "Nineteenth Century" for June and July 1878, *commenced by Mr Gladstone.*

MR GLADSTONE'S proposition as understood by Lord Arthur Russell, and indeed as originally enunciated by himself, seemed startling and questionable enough. As it promises to issue from the alembic of this discussion—guarded and mitigated in its terms, limited in its scope, interpreted and exemplified by some of its exponents, and modified by the suggestions of more cautious but still sympathetic minds—it seems impossible to deny to it a considerable measure of suggestive, encouraging, and prolific truth, for which it is well worth while to secure a less loose and excessive, and a more precise expression.

Probably it will be found that the essence and sound kernel of the broad proposition we are criticising may be reduced to the following dimensions:—that the mass, the populace, the uneducated classes, are in their political views and conclusions more guided by impulse and less by reflection than those above them in the social scale; that they look rather to the larger

and more obvious, which are often the more essential, points of a question, than to its minor and modifying features; that their sympathies are, if not always truer, at least prompter, keener, more unqualified, more imperious than those of the higher orders. Nay, we may perhaps go further and recognise that they are as a rule—certainly often—more generous and hearty in those sympathies, especially with the wronged and the oppressed or those they deem such, and far more to be counted on for obeying these estimable feelings, when once aroused, without regard to selfish interests and consequences, than classes who might be expected to take loftier, wider, and more complex views. It will follow from these admissions that in those grand and simple political issues which every now and then come up before a community for solution, into which morals enter more largely than considerations of expediency, and in which the impulses of natural and unperverted men, and usually of aggregated men (that is, of *masses*), may be trusted for substantial kindliness and justice—in questions where the equitable features lie upon the surface and are written in sunbeams, or where the principle involved is so great and clear that the details which obscure and the collateral consequences which complicate may safely be neglected—in those cases, few and rare, yet whose existence cannot be denied, where (to use the noble and convincing expression of Burke) 'the heart of youth may be wiser than the head of age'—it may well be granted, I say, that in issues of

this character the 'popular' judgment may be sounder than that of classes far better educated and informed.

But such decisions are much slower to be reached by virtue of the far wider range of the considerations that have to be weighed and searched for, and the vision, we must also allow, is apt to be dulled and deflected by inescapable but very grave egotistical bearings.

Further than this I cannot go with Mr Gladstone. Several of his representations I cannot recognise as more than partially correct; and I entirely demur to the large practical conclusions which he and his supporters draw as being, I consider, but loosely connected with their premisses. Even in the admissions I have made above I can scarcely conceal from myself that the same facts might have been stated in less flattering language, and perhaps less ungrudgingly. I might remark that the masses are apt to be led and governed by their *impulses*, even when these take the form of vehement passions rather than of generous or kindly emotions. Nor, while recognising to the full the curious sagacity and racy powers of reasoning often very skilfully applied, with which numbers among them are truly credited by Mr Harrison, and which, as he justly says, constitute in themselves a political education far more properly deserving of the name than that of the idler ranks who may have passed or graduated at Eton or at Oxford, can I recognise, as a general feature of the working classes, that freedom from prejudice and power of doing justice to the arguments of their superiors in rank, nor that

facility to welcome instruction and guidance even where they must be conscious of their own ignorance and inaptitude, in which Mr Gladstone appears to have so large and generous a faith. The Tichborne case, referred to by Lord Arthur Russell, appears to me, in spite of the sarcasm of Mr F. Harrison, to be singularly significant. The 'Claimant' was upheld, followed, admired, and *stuck to* with strange enthusiasm by the masses, and not by those of London only. His advocate, with even less rationality, was almost more noisily applauded. Note, too, the analysis, which can scarcely be questioned, of the 'Claimant's' worshippers among the crowd. Half of them gave the measure of their reasoning capacity by retaining their belief and their adherence in defiance of the crushing demolition of his case by the Lord Chief Justice; the other half, who probably never believed in the justice of his claims at all, were his loyal adherents to the end, and would have given him a verdict without turning in the jury box (while by implication avowing its inequity), because cordially admiring '*the pluck of a butcher's son for standing up with such gallantry against a baronet.*'

Nor, again, can I observe that the working classes have of late shown much of the readiness to be guided by the advice and arguments even of their own admitted friends and recognised leaders, on questions relating to their own interests and where they might be expected to be acquainted with the facts of the case and to be competent to form a sagacious judg-

ment. I do not refer to instances, too many and surprising enough, alas! where Trades Union chiefs have taken up the shallowest doctrines and the most untenable positions. I speak of the many occasions of disputes about wages which have occurred during the last two disastrous years, when the choice of the men lay between work on the master's terms or no work at all; when the leaders, who saw this, counselled submission, but the men, who could scarcely deny the truth, found the truth too unwelcome to be candidly recognised; nay more, when meetings were held to which most of the attendants went with the intention of accepting the inevitable and closing with the offered rates, but when this wholesome temper was entirely turned aside and changed into bitterness by the firebrand speech of some reckless agitator, and a prolongation of the strike was carried by an overpowering vote. And this observation reminds us of another danger which reflective public men should be the last to ignore or undervalue—the peculiar proneness, namely, of popular assemblies to be swayed by oratory rather than by reasoning and knowledge: a proneness to which they are liable just in proportion as they are *popular* (*i.e.* composed of the excitable and uncultivated masses)—just in proportion, one might possibly add, as the sentiments involved and appealed to are generous and sympathetic.[1] Susceptibility to eloquence

[1] It may perhaps be not quite safe to appeal to the sentiments of the masses during the phase of popular excitement through which we are now passing; but it is questionable whether the

is the notorious danger of liberal constitutions and democratic assemblies, perhaps we might say their besetting sin; and eloquence is mightier far when championing passionate emotion than when pleading the cause of sober wisdom; mightier, too—and this is a matter for grave consideration—when giving utterance to the awakened animosities and prejudices of the hour than when anxiously forecasting graver and remoter but no less certain issues.

'This is no discussion about a Reform Bill,' says Mr Harrison, 'nor are we settling the respective claims of popular or oligarchic government.' I beg to remind him that the discussion grew out of the proposal for a new Reform Bill, and the special proposition we are criticising, its soundness or unsoundness, directly involves the justice of those claims. Mr Gladstone's entire argument implies this; so does Mr Hutton's skilful and ingenious historical retrospect of the last seventy years. The very proposition itself

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majority of the *people*—of those whom we may speak of as the *unpropertied classes*—is not to be ranged on that which Mr Gladstone has taken such effective pains to persuade us is the wrong and the unrighteous side. 'Society,' we know—the idler and military ranks, the 'upper ten thousand,' &c.—incline mainly and passionately to the Turkish side; the middle, the intellectual, the commercial classes, are chiefly Russian, or at least hostile to the Porte; but is it not the case, especially in the metropolis, that far the larger portion of those below them, in spite of Bulgarian atrocities, in disregard of Mr Gladstone's campaign, are still the vehement backers of the most recklessly warlike and Chauvinist minister we have had for long, in his policy of involving us in hostilities for the maintenance of about the worst government with which we have ever been mixed up?

appears to have been announced in so broad a form distinctly in order to cover and to justify a large modification of our Parliamentary institutions in a popular direction, and to discredit oligarchical pretensions. Both interlocutors argue that the experience of the Past may be taken as a guarantee against the foreseen or fancied perils of the Future—that, because our previous extensions of the franchise have brought us no evil, but, on the contrary, good, therefore we may venture without anxiety—nay, with sanguine confidence—on an extension yet wider and more sweeping.

The plea appears to me to break down, or rather to be inexact and inapplicable; and the immense reliance on it shown by two men so unusually trained in political experience and conversant with political philosophy, may almost be characterised as startling. I demur to the conclusions drawn from Mr Hutton's appeal to the experiments of the last sixty years, confidently as it is made, because those experiments do not embrace any, properly speaking, popular, or perhaps I ought to say *populace*, electorates; and I object to Mr Gladstone's apparent hopes from the newest and rashest extension of the franchise, because it has not yet really and fully come into operation, and for another reason which I shall come to presently. To exact reasoners the Past offers no safe augury for the Future. The analogy being far too partial and imperfect.

We have seen several Reform Bills framed on

different lines and directed to different issues—essentially and fundamentally different. The original plan, the great and beneficent one, was designed to correct certain flagrant abuses and anomalies in our representation, and to supply certain still more undeniable omissions and defects. It was framed (to speak broadly) with the object of embracing within the electoral pale as many as might be of the *qualified* classes—*i.e.* of those possessing property of whatever sort, and education of suitable degree: in a word, that enormous proportion of our population whose claims were universally allowed to be, as a rule, at least equal to the average of those already endowed with the suffrage, and in many cases far superior. So far was that act from giving votes to the working classes properly so called—those who might be broadly described as habitually uneducated and living mainly or exclusively on wages—that it distinctly recognised their *then* unfitness—I would rather say unripeness—by ultimately *disfranchising* all of this description who at that period were on the electoral register, namely, freemen and scot-and-lot voters. The two subsequent measures brought forward by Liberal Governments were, if I remember rightly, framed on the same general lines, but with lower suffrage qualifications as justified by the progress of the times.

The two last Reform Bills—the Tory measure of 1867, conferring the franchise on the householders in boroughs, and the Liberal measure proposing to extend the same privilege to the county population—were

entirely different, not to say alien, in their principle, their object, and their bearings. They admitted to the electoral register *en masse*, originally all ratepayers, finally all householders and lodgers even who preferred their claim. They were designed to enfranchise virtually nearly the whole class of operatives in towns and labourers in rural districts, with no reference to either property or education. The great distinction then between the two sets of measures may be thus stated with substantial accuracy:—The *first* demanded a property qualification for admission to the franchise; so far from lowering, it practically raised the educational standard of the electoral body, and, while enormously enlarging and liberalising the basis of the Parliamentary Register, it did not enable the new voters to outnumber and to swamp the old ones. The *second* pretty nearly reversed these features; made a vast stride in the direction of manhood suffrage by requiring a merely residential in place of a property qualification; conferred the franchise wholesale on the millions who live on weekly wages; thus enabling these classes, whenever they please, or as soon as their natural leaders or designing agitators instruct them in the secret of their strength, to outvote all the previous electorate—putting it *in their power*, that is (for I am anxious not to overstate the case), to acquire the command of both the administrative and legislative functions, and to direct and control both our foreign policy and the amount as well as the incidence of our taxation, perhaps the

two subjects which can least safely be entrusted to their decision.

These are the enormous discrepancies between the old Reform measures and the new; and yet Mr Gladstone and Mr Hutton deem themselves logical and safe in arguing from the beneficent operation of the one to the safety and the desirableness of the other; and our Liberals would proceed with the *cœur léger* of Emile Ollivier to confer a gift which is not needed, which cannot be resumed, and which may be so fatally abused.

But *is* Mr Gladstone, in sober earnest, as confident about the salutary effects of our hitherto reforms on the Parliamentary institutions of to-day as his sanguine temperament and his quivering popular sympathies have almost persuaded himself? Is he in very truth satisfied with the House of Commons, such as Reform Bills—and especially the last one, the household suffrage of 1867, incomplete and inchoate as it yet is—have made it? Does he think the 'People's Chamber' of 1878 in all the most essential characteristics so indisputable an improvement on that of 1834, that it can be appealed to as undeniable proof that all previous extensions of the franchise have worked well, and an encouragement to go further and at once in the same direction? Certainly his latest writings do not indicate that such are the final convictions of the experienced politician, who must be anxious to take the most favourable view he can. On the contrary, in many passages he holds, and I

think justly, language of disappointment, discouragement, and sadness—though as yet not of repentance at his own share in the work. And, curiously enough, Mr Lowe, dissenting from him in most points, and most of all in *tone*, coincides with him here and uses phraseology almost identical.

What the general public observes in looking at the representative assembly which we owe to the latest Reform Act, and the widened electorate is probably this:—that the popular judgment, which Mr Gladstone regards as nearly always right, has replaced the most conspicuously pacific minister of our times by the most apparently warlike and Chauvinistic, and a premier specially and, as many fear, dangerously liberal, for a rival whose most rooted notions (as far as it is possible to gather them from the aggregate of his utterances) tend, like those of his great Imperial prototype, towards personal government and the increase of the power of the Crown resting on a democratic basis; that this same popular judgment (so instinctively sound, we are assured) has given to the chief it has enthroned a working majority of about 100, which, added to his own singular genius for swaying the wills and views of all who come under his influence, promises to render him nearly irresistible; that, expressing itself so largely through the publican element in the constituencies, that element—by no means the noblest—has naturally been largely considered by the Government which owed to it so much; and that the budgets of the Cabinet thus

chosen bear traces only too manifest of a disposition to pander to the interests and the errors of the lower portion of its supporters;—in fine, that neither the financial nor the foreign policy of the House of Commons elected by far the most numerous constituency yet known is such as we can consider either creditable, wise, or safe; and that, neither in courtesy, dignity, nor decorum have its manners been worthy of the past or models for the future.

What Mr Gladstone condemns and dreads in the House of Commons he states candidly and with force, though as yet he entirely declines 'to ascribe them to the extension of the suffrage.' But—

> the evils of our Parliamentary system I regard as great and growing. . . . The longer I live the less do I see in the public institutions of any country even a tendency to approximate to an ideal standard.

Yet every year, and everywhere, do they become more democratic.

> Turning to our own, amidst all our vaunted and all our real improvements, I see in some very important respects a sad tendency to decline. It seems to me that, as a whole, our level of public principle and public action was at its zenith in the twenty years or thereabouts which succeeded the Reform Act of 1832, *and that it has since perceptibly gone down.* I agree with Mr Lowe that we are in danger of engendering both a gerontocracy and a plutocracy. . . . The two circumstances which strike me most forcibly and most painfully are, first, the rapid and constant advance of the money power; secondly, the reduction almost to zero of the chances of entrance into Parliament for men who have nothing to rely upon but their talents and their character—nothing, that is to say, but the two qualities which certainly stand before all others in the capacity of rendering service to the country.

The place of the young and highly trained whose absence he deplores, has, Mr Gladstone says,

> been taken mainly by men who have been recommended to their constituents by the possession of money. . . . The loss has been among those who had the very best capacity to serve the country. The gain has accrued to those whose main object is to serve themselves. I do not mean in a corrupt sense. It is to serve themselves by social advancement. The total exclusion of such men is probably not to be desired, but their swollen and swelling numbers *are a national calamity*. It is a calamity with a double edge.

The excluded, Mr Gladstone says, are driven mainly to the press, which affords them a very much less valuable education.

> It gives them a laborious training in irresponsible, anonymous, pungent criticism, in lieu of the manly and noble discipline which a youth spent in Parliament imparts. In the light of day, under the eye and judgment of the best, at once stimulated and restrained, at once encouraged and abashed, our youth had everything to sustain a high sense of political warfare, to develope the better parts of a knightly nature, to rebuke the sordid and the base. Invert all these expressions, and we attain a tolerably accurate description of the kind of education which our modern arrangements have provided for the most ready, brilliant, and serviceable of the young men of England in lieu of a seat in Parliament. These are not pleasant things to say, but it is perhaps time they should be said.[1]

The discussion on this subject has led me to re-peruse Mr Lowe's testimony to the lowered tone and character of the actual House, so strikingly corroborative of Mr Gladstone's, though dwelling upon different

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, November 1877, p. 555 *et seq.* 'Two new articles, pretty closely associated together, have lately been added to the Tory creed, not by a general council, but by silent consent—faith in the long purse, and faith in what Mr Bright in one of his many happy phrases dubbed the *residuum*' (p. 557).

points, and ascribing the degeneracy to its more obvious causes.

No one but the most bigoted partisan will deny that after four Sessions the Government is just as strong in the House as it was when it began. This has been achieved by consulting the wishes of the House; that is, by a lavish expenditure of public money, by a studious deference to all powerful interests, by a dexterous use of committees and commissions to stave off troublesome subjects, by a copious use of permissive legislation, and by never carrying or even proposing a single measure or broaching a single idea which soars above the level of the dullest and most self-satisfied mediocrity. As was said the other day by a gentleman who did not appear to be aware that he was passing the most crushing sentence on the existing state of things, the duties of the House of Commons now resemble those of a municipal council or a board of guardians rather than those which the House used to discharge. Most true they do so, but why is it? Not because there are no problems in the higher regions of statesmanship unsolved and earnestly craving a solution. Four millions of persons in London are left without the powers of self-government which are granted to most towns with ten thousand inhabitants and to many with much less; the government of the counties is left to a number of intersecting boards—that is to say, is abandoned to a state of the most hideous confusion; the law in all its branches requires revision and codification; the state of the navy is to all thinking persons a subject of the deepest anxiety; and the whole question of the higher education requires a complete and searching revision. If it be asked, Why do not these things and many others, of which these are only a specimen, occupy the attention of government? the answer, if given candidly, would doubtless be, that these things do not pay. They require a great deal of trouble and research, they inevitably give much offence to the influential persons immediately concerned, and there is no popularity to be got by them. Those who elect the House which virtually appoints the Government, care for none of these things, and so very naturally none of these things are cared for. Politics in the higher sense of the term, are almost banished from the House of Commons, and no one seems to regret their loss.[1]

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1877.

Certainly, whether we attribute the fact to the Irish Home Rulers, to a government unable to control or guide its supporters, or to the perverted views and passionate temperament of the bulk of those supporters, is it too much to say that the least noble-minded and the worst-mannered House of Commons we have known has been the one chosen by the most popular and broad-based electorate that has ever crowded round the hustings or expressed its wisdom and judgment at the poll? Nor, I fancy, would Mr Gladstone at all deny the description, however he might question the explanation I suggest.

IX.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.[1]

THE biography of this remarkable woman has been received by the public with the eagerness and interest which her fame and her works were pretty sure to command, and has been so widely read that all who see this notice may be confidently assumed to be familiar with the book itself. We can, therefore, dispense with the task of following the narrative step by step, or in any material detail. At the same time the reviews of it which have appeared have, with scarcely an exception, been so discriminating and appreciative, and on the whole so kind and just, that little is left to correct and not a great deal to supply.

But, deeply interesting as the work is, it is impossible to deny that it has given more pain than pleasure to large numbers of those friends who knew her best and valued her most truly. Her own autobiography does her so much less than justice, and the needless, tasteless, and ill-conditioned memorials of the lady to whom she injudiciously entrusted the duties of editor, have managed to convey such an unsound and disfiguring impression of her friend, that

[1] *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, with Memorials.* By Maria Weston Chapman. 3 vols.

the testimony of one who enjoyed her intimacy for many years, and entertained a sincere regard for her throughout, seems wanted to rectify the picture.

It is idle to criticise the egotism of autobiographies, however pervading and intense. Their egotism is their *raison d'être*. It is certain that all persons know much about themselves which no one else can know, look and must look at themselves from a special standpoint, and from one which has, if exceptional dangers, exceptional advantages as well; and the more thoroughly searching and self-observing —that is, the more egotistical—their narrative is, the more valuable is it likely to prove. All that we are entitled to require is that it shall be unflinchingly honest and sincere according to the writer's light. Self-knowledge, humility, just and moderate appreciation of their qualities and achievements, we may desiderate, but we have no right to demand. The very absence of these mental or moral gifts may be among the most salient characteristics which it is the worth of autobiography that it reveals to us. We cannot claim from the painters of their own portraits, or the writers of their own lives, that they shall tell us truly what they were, only that they shall tell us truthfully what they appeared to themselves to be—and this requisite of biography Miss Martineau rigidly fulfils. Writing invariably with the most patent candour and courage, she *tells* the truth wherever and so far as she could see it, and *betrays* it

almost as plainly where it was obviously hidden from her eyes.

But not only is the book preponderatingly full of herself, as it was quite right that it should be; not only does it describe everything exclusively and unquestioningly from her own point of view, as was inevitable: it will appear to most readers to paint the world itself as also extravagantly full of her, and to represent herself as occupying a larger space in its horizon, and making a more prominent figure in its drama, than was really the case. She describes herself, from her first sudden plunge into publicity and fame in 1832 (when the extraordinary success of her *Political Economy Tales* took the world by surprise), as run after, fêted, flattered, beset with admirers, haunted and beleaguered by politicians who wanted to use her, publishers who wanted to secure her services, worshippers of celebrity who wanted her presence in their saloons, real adorers of talent and worth, who out of simple kindliness and interest wished to know and to befriend a writer of such rare promise;—and she narrates all this with a certain natural excitement and vividness of colouring which irresistibly convey the impression of exaggeration. The answer is that all this was true. The London world did run after her in a fashion to which it is often prone. Her advent created a sensation which was extraordinary, which, looking back upon the circumstances, seems now somewhat disproportionate to its cause, and which continued for a longer period

than is usual with sudden enthusiasms of that nature. The *digito monstrari et dicier hæc est* haunted her steps for many years and in far-distant scenes. 'The United States,' says Mrs Chapman, 'seemed for the moment a mere whispering gallery for the transmission of her opinions.' Fussy patriots of several lands applied to her to make constitutions for them, and to plead their cause before the world's tribunal. Small blame to her if she took herself at the world's estimation, and believed, what hosts of people assured her, hour by hour—namely, that she was a rising star, a new power come upon the stage, gifted with astonishing capacities and destined to an exceptional career. She was not exactly spoiled by her metropolitan reception, novel and stimulating as it was; but it developed the seeds of already existing faults into a singularly rapid growth. She was suspiciously on her guard against its dangers; she resented the bare notion of being 'lionised' and constantly fancied she was being lionised in circles whose tone, if she had understood it, would have secured her from anything of the sort. She accepted homage readily enough, and enjoyed it thoroughly, though scarcely simply; for she took up the absurd position of refusing to be sought for her eminent talent and success, 'would not be visited or invited as a blue-stocking, but as a lady, &c.'—forgetting that, as a mere unknown lady and apart from her literary powers, she had no claim to be visited at all; so that no wonder her genial and experienced friend, Mr Hallam, thought her conceited and presuming. There

is scarcely an indication of simple gratification at having obtained entrance and cordial greeting into a class of society incomparably superior, intellectually and politically, to that she had been used to—no trace of a perception that it *was* in any way superior —no attitude of mind towards it except the critical one; and her criticisms were, in the vast majority of instances, depreciating even to unseemliness.

The tone in which she speaks of at least half her London acquaintances, her sketches of friends and foes alike, the sovereign contempt in the one set of portraits, the rancorous animosity in the other, and the utter injustice and almost libellous character of many, are probably the features of her book which will leave the most painful impression. The Whigs, as a body, though the party to whose gallant efforts the wonderful progress of the nation in those days was incontestably due, were, for some reason or other, the objects of her vehement detestation.

"The young Romillys had virtuous projects when they entered political life, and had every hope of achieving service worthy of their father's fame; but their aspirations were speedily tamed down, *as all high aspirations are lowered by Whig influences.*" "The Whig touch perished it (the voice of the people) at once; the poverty and perverseness of their ideas and the insolence of their feelings were precisely what might have been expected from *that remarkably vulgar class of men.*" "There was nothing to be expected from the official Whigs now (1848) that they were spoiled by the possession of place and power. [They had been her earliest admirers and most eager assistants, but they had made the mistake of offering advice.] I had seen that they had learned nothing by their opportunities; that they were hardened in their conceit and prejudices, and as blind as bats to the new lights which time was introducing into society. . . . I have

seen a good deal of life, and many varieties of manners; and it now appears to me (1855) that *the broadest vulgarity I have encountered is in the families of official Whigs*, who conceive themselves the cream of society, and the lights and rulers of the empire."

Her abuse of Brougham we shall not contest, and there may have been excuse enough for her remarks on Lockhart and Croker. But her *de-haut-en-bas* judgment of Macaulay is perhaps widest of the mark. He was all blossom and no fruit; "he wants heart;" his speeches "were fundamentally *weak*;" "he has never (1855) achieved any complete success. As a politician his failure has been signal," &c., &c.

Her sketch of Bishop Stanley is ludicrously astray; he, remarkable for pluck and spirit, and liberal in days when liberality was rare, "had no courage or dignity under the bad manners of his Tory clergy; and he repeatedly talked to me about it in such a style as to compel me to tell him plainly that dissenters like myself are not only accustomed to ill-usage for difference of opinion, but are brought up to regard that trial as one belonging to all honest avowal of convictions, and to be borne with courage and patience like other trials!"

But "good Mr Porter, of the Board of Trade," an intimate friend of her own, the eminent publicist and statistician, perhaps fares the worst. He was "amiable and friendly, industrious and devoted to his business, but sadly weak and inaccurate, prejudiced and *borné* in ability." "Nothing could be more untrustworthy and delusive than his statistics." His great book, still

an authority, on the *Progress of the Nation*, is declared to be full of the shallowest and most ludicrous blunders. "Not his innocent vanity, which was far from immoderate, but his deficiency in sense and intellectual range, together with his confidence in himself and his want of confidence in all public men, was an insuperable disqualification for the sound discharge of his functions," &c., &c.

Now it is difficult for those who read this gallery of portraits—shallow, contemptuous, condemnatory, and curiously astray as, in spite of occasional shrewdness, they for the most part are—who remember, too, that they are the judicial sentences delivered posthumously upon a number of eminent contemporaries by a writer whose most marked characteristic it was that she would neither endure nor pardon the faintest censure on herself, nor admit for a moment that any human being had the slightest claim to sit in judgment on her, far less to express an opinion or pronounce a verdict—and who find that these depreciating pictures were painted, laid by in closets, embalmed for the enlightenment of posterity, for twenty years before the painter's death without any dream of revision—it is difficult for readers not to receive the impression that Miss Martineau was essentially ill-natured and given to bitterness and depreciation. In conveying this impression she does herself grievous injustice. There has seldom been a more kindly-hearted or affectionate person, or even one more given to an over-estimate of her friends, perhaps even more prone to make idols

out of not quite the finest clay, more watchfully considerate to all dependent upon her, more steadfastly devoted to those who had once got hold of her imagination or attachment, unless they tried her constancy too hardly by criticism, opposition, or condemnation. All her geese were swans. All her servants and junior relatives were devoted to her, and with good reason, for there was a vast element of geniality about her. In spite of the painful description she gives of her early life (which we believe her connections scarcely recognise as faithful), she was, we should pronounce, from the time she had once found her work and made her mark, a singularly happy person; and continued to grow happier and happier, illness notwithstanding, till near the end. Her unflinching belief in herself, her singular exemption from the sore torment of doubt or hesitation, helped to make her so. Now, happy people, where really good-hearted and sociable, are genial; their enjoyment is so simple and genuine, and their confidence in the prompt cordial sympathy of those around them is so undoubting and so provocative of response. The charm of Harriet Martineau's intercourse (passing over the fits of indignation her dogmatic damnation of your bosom friends would often rouse) may be understood by those who read the "Sixth Period" of her autobiography—especially the description of the joyous epoch when, in the midst of rest, and health, and vigour, she settled among the lakes and mountains of Westmoreland, built her Windermere home, and reorganised her recovered

life for a fresh burst of animation and productiveness.

Her character was easy to read, for in one sense it was consistent enough and presented no mysteries or depths; and her faults, which were neither few nor small, were readily forgiven her, for she loved much and laboured hard for the happiness of others. In an unusual degree it was to be said of Harriet Martineau *qu'elle avait les défauts de ses qualités.* It would indeed have been difficult for her to have had the mental and moral gifts which distinguished her so signally without the analogous errors, in the way of deficiency or excess, which impaired their perfection and detracted from their value. "Authors," says Southey, "may be divided into two classes, spiders and silk-worms—those who spin because they are empty, and those who spin because they are full." Miss Martineau was one of the latter. She never, after her very youthful years, wrote either for money or for fame. She wrote because the matter was borne in upon her, because the idea or the subject had taken possession of her, because the thing in her conception "wanted saying," and it was in her to say it, and was not open to her to withhold it. With the promptitude and force of irresistible conviction the work assumed in her mind the position of a duty to be done—almost of an inspired utterance that *must* be given forth. Hence the curious arrogance with which she resented the slightest approaches towards suggestion, remonstrance, or advice, the *noli me tangere*

vehemence with which she insisted that no other mind should ever be permitted to interfere with the operations or visions of her own. Hence also the extraordinarily rapid imaginations she poured out, and the unhesitating confidence with which, when once written, she hurried them to the press. She not only would not alter at the suggestion of others; she would rarely if ever revise or correct in consequence of any caution or misgiving of her own. Misgiving seems, indeed, to have been a sensation that was alien to her constitution. Like Balaam, the word that the Lord put into her mouth, that she must speak. Her marvellous productiveness, the unequalled rapidity with which she turned out her admirable stories, might well cultivate her self-confidence to an extravagant degree. No one who worked so quickly or so hard ever worked so well. It seemed almost—quite so to herself—"as if it were given her in that same hour what she should say." There was no long brooding, no meditation, no slow process of hatching inchoate germs, no painful collection of ample and carefully sifted materials; the plan and the table of contents of her books, as it were, flashed upon her like the intuitions of a poet; the executive efficiency of her intelligence was absolutely unrivalled; her style was always, nearly from the outset, clear, lucid, vigorous, and simple, without a trace of effort, and never, as far as we remember, betraying the faintest lapse into those faults of fine or ambitious writing which are the besetting sin of youth.

Considering, then, these extraordinary powers, her consciousness of abounding energy, the suddenness and brilliancy of her success, and the fame and adulation with which she was surrounded at such exciting times and amid such dazzling circles, the self-confidence which promptly grew upon her, however regrettable, was not only natural, but its absence would have been all but miraculous. The truth is that doubt seems to have been a state of mind unknown to her. She never *reconsidered* her opinions, or mused over her judgments. They were instantaneous insights, not deliberate or gradual deductions. It scarcely seemed to occur to her that she *could* be wrong; that thousands of eminent or wise men differed from her never appeared to suggest the probability; we never recollect her views, if once formed, being changed or materially modified during a discussion. And this was the more remarkable because, in the first place, her confidence in her opinions was not irrational conceit in her own powers; on the contrary, her estimate of these was not at all inordinate, but, as may be seen especially in her last obituary notice of herself in the *Daily News*, rather below the truth, not to say wide of it. And in the second place, she was by no means an unimpressible person, but the reverse. If you spoke to her of men or things before she had formed any judgment of either, you usually found little difficulty in writing your impressions on her mind; but if you were a day too late, if you missed your innings, it was almost hopeless to effect a change—she was

Wax to receive, and marble to retain.

Given, then, a mind of really almost unrivalled innate powers, and, as was inevitable, a strong consciousness of those powers and an irrepressible impulse to use them, a vivid imagination incessantly at work, and — owing partly to deafness and partly to the early want of exuberant sympathies around her—working usually in solitude ; courage, fortitude, and pertinacity of something like the Stoic stamp, a force of conviction akin to that of the fanatic and the martyr, an impatience of temperament amounting to a sort of incapacity for doubt, and rendering suspension of judgment an unnatural frame of mind—and the fair analyst of character is driven to pronounce that Harriet Martineau could not easily have been less dogmatic, less hasty, or less imperious than she was. One grievous mistake—the parent of countless errors and injustices—she might indeed have escaped, and it is strange that so clear an intelligence as hers should have become so habitually its victim ; for the rock was staringly above water. Her deafness absolutely disqualified her either for accurate observation or positive judgments of men—yet she never appears to have dreamed of the disqualification. In society she heard only what was directly intended for her, and moreover only what was specially designed to pass down her trumpet ; and comments, sentiments, and statements that must go through this ordeal are inevitably manufactured, or at least modified for export. A hundred things are *dropped* or whispered which are never shouted, or pronounced *ore rotundo* or oracularly

—and these former are precisely the things which betray character and suggest true conclusions. As Sydney Smith remarked in reference to her, 'she took *au sérieux* half the sayings I meant as mystifications.' Moreover, not only was she not on her guard against this obviously fertile source of blunders—not only did it inspire no sense of misgiving—but she aggravated its unavoidable mischief by a practice, which grew upon her as life went on, of laying down the trumpet before the sentence or the paragraph of her interlocutor was complete, or sometimes, we must add, when she had decided that it would not be worth listening to, or when it was apparently tending in an unwelcome direction. Thus the information or impression conveyed to her by a conversation was often altogether inaccurate or imperfect, but never on that account for one instant mistrusted. Those who knew her were fully aware of this peculiarity, and those of her readers who remember the times, and scenes, and people of whom she writes can trace innumerable instances of it, and will be on their guard against too absolute a reliance on narratives and statements written down twenty years after date, then printed and laid up in lavender for another twenty years, and now in many cases out of reach of authoritative correction.

In another point Miss Martineau had *les défauts de ses qualités.* She was conscientious, we may say, in the extreme; her conscience was not only commanding—it had something about it excessive, morbid, or

awry. She obeyed it like an oracle, but she rarely took the precaution of requesting it to reconsider its decisions. Now, with all reasonable deference to popular axioms of morality, it is not at all impossible for men and women to have too imperious and impetuous a conscience—in fact, to carry more sail than their ballast will warrant or can bear. Harriet Martineau did this in a signal manner. Having no power of doubt and no sense of fear, she christened all her impulses with the name of Duty, and followed them resolutely and in defiance of remonstrance. Like many of us, only more than most, she abounded in 'views,' which she called 'principles,' and then anointed and enthroned. Conscience was rather her tyrant than her guide, and was installed before it had been anxiously enlightened.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of the autobiography to many will prove to be the narrative of the writer's theological, or, as she names it, anti-theological progress, the gradual movement of a curiously courageous, honest, and inquiring mind—one, too, singularly earnest in tone and religious in temperament—from positive belief to equally 'positive philosophy.'[1] She began as a Unitarian of the

[1] 'It was very kind of you to write that last letter to me. I agree in, and like, almost every word of it; but I was especially pleased to see your distinct recognition of the good of the old superstitions in their day. As a necessarian, you are of course bound to recognise this; but the way in which you point it out pleases me, because it is the great idea I have before me in my book. I have found the good of those old superstitions in my

dryest and most dogmatic form, and ended life as an enthusiastic Agnostic. She began as a disciple of Belsham, and finished as a disciple of Comte; and of each faith in turn she was, we need scarcely say, an

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day. How it might have been with me (how much better) if I had had parents of your way of thinking, there is no saying. As it was, I was *very* religious (far beyond the knowledge and intentions of my parents) till I was quite grown up. I don't know what I should have done without my faith; for I was an unhealthy and most unhappy child, and had no other resource. Yet it used to strike me often, and most painfully, that whatever relief and comfort my religion gave to my feelings, it did not help me much against my faults. Certainly, my belief in a future life never was either check or stimulus to me in the matter of self-government. Five-and-twenty years ago I became a thoroughly grounded necessarian. I have never wavered for an hour on that point since; and nothing ever gave me so much comfort. Of course this paved the way for the cessation of prayer. I left off praying, however, less from seeing the absurdity (though I did see it) of petitioning about things already ordained, than from a keen sense of the impiety of prayer. First, I could not pray for daily bread, or for any outward good, because I really did not wish to ask for them, not knowing whether they would be good for me or not. So, for some years I prayed only for good states of mind for myself and others. Of course, the feeling grew on me that true piety required resignation about spiritual matters as much as others. So I left off express prayer, and without remorse. As for Christ's example and need of prayer, I felt that he did not mean what we did by prayer; and I think so still. I think he would condemn our prayers as much as he did those of the Pharisees of his time, and that with him prayer was contemplation and aspiration chiefly. Next, I saw very painfully (I mean with the pain of disgust) how much lower a thing it is to lead even the loftiest life from a regard to the will or mind of any other being, than from a natural working out of our own powers. I felt this first as to resignation under suffering, and soon after as to moral action. Now, I do know something of this matter of resignation. I know it to the very bottom. I have been a very great sufferer—subject to

ardent and undoubting proselytizing preacher. Her earliest literary success consisted of three prize essays on the arguments for converting Catholics, Mohammedans, and Jews to Unitarian Christianity. Her

keen miseries almost all my life till quite lately; and never, I am pretty confident, did any one acquiesce in God's will with a more permanent enthusiasm than I did, because this suited the bent of my nature. But I became ashamed of this—ashamed of that kind of support when I felt I had a much higher ground of patience in myself.' . . . .

'As to what my present views are, when clearly brought to the point of expression they are just these. I feel a most reverential sense of something wholly beyond our apprehension. Here we are in the universe! this is all we know; and while we feel ourselves in this isolated position, with obscurity before and behind, we must feel that there is something above and beyond us. If that something were God (as people mean by that word), and I am confident it is not, he would consider those of us the noblest who must have evidence in order to belief—who can wait to learn rather than run into supposition. As for the whole series of faiths, my present studies would have been enough, if I had not been prepared before to convince me that all the forms of the higher religions contain (in their best aspect) the same great and noble ideas, which arise naturally out of our own minds, and grow with the growth of the general mind; but that there really is *no* evidence whatever of any sort of revelation at any point in the history. The idea of a future life, too, I take to be a necessary one (I mean necessary for support) in its proper place, but likely to die out when men better understand their nature and the *summum bonum* which it encloses. At the same time, so ignorant as I am of what is possible in nature, I do not deny the possibility of a life after death; and if I believed the desire for it to be as universal as I once thought it, I should look upon so universal a tendency as some presumption in favour of a continual life. But I doubt the desire and belief being so general as they are said to be; and then the evidence in favour of it is nothing—except some unaccountable mesmeric stories. What a long confession of faith I have written you! Yes, it *is* faith, is it not? and not infidelity,

last book was the *Letters on Man's Nature and Development*, which she undertook in concert with her final 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' Mr Atkinson, for the conversion of Judaism, Islamism, Christianity,

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as ninety-nine hundredths of the world would call it. As for the loneliness I spoke of, I don't generally mind it; and there is abundant ground of sympathy between me and my best friends, as long as occasion does not require that I should give names to my opinions. I have not yet had any struggle with my natural openness or indiscretion. I never could conceal any opinion I hold, and I am sure I never would; and I know, therefore, that I am at the mercy (in regard to reputation and some of my friendships) of accident, which may at any hour render an avowal necessary. But I do not fear this. I have run so many inferior risks, and suffered so little in my peace by divers avowals and heresies, that I am not likely to tremble now. What does give me a qualm sometimes is thinking what such friends as —— and as —— will suffer, whenever they come to know that I think their "Christian hope" baseless. They are widows, and they live by their expectation of a future life. I seriously believe that —— would go mad or die, if this hope were shaken in her; and my opinions are more to her than any others since her husband's death. But I say to myself as you would say, that these matters must take care of themselves. If the truth comes to me, I must believe it. Yes, I should not wonder if there is a prodigious clamour against me some day, as you say—perhaps after this book comes out. But I don't think I should care for that, about a matter of opinion. I should (or might) about a matter of conduct, for I am sadly weak in my love of approbation; but about a matter of opinion I can't and don't believe what I once did; and there's an end. It is a thing which settles itself; for there is no going back to discarded beliefs. It is a great comfort to me to have you to speak to, and to look to for sympathy. It is a delightful indulgence and refreshment; but if you were to die, or to be engrossed by other interests and occupations, so as to diverge from me, I think I could do without sympathy in a matter so certain as my inability to believe as I once did.'—*Autobiography*, vol. ii. pp. 288-91.

and Deism from all forms of theological belief alike. Her Unitarianism was early discarded, and discarded with what seems to us, according to her own account, irrational and uncharitable contempt. She was first shaken by the necessarian doctrine, then altogether upset by a strong impression of the deep *selfishness* and almost shocking notions of God which appeared to lie at the root of the whole scheme of damnation and redemption embodied in the popular creed—an impression by no means uncommon with those who either approach Christianity from the outside, or eventually get outside it.

The departure of these and many more kept the subject of death vividly before me, and compelled me to reduce my vague and fanciful speculations on 'the divine government' and human destiny to a greater precision and accuracy. The old perplexity about the apparent cruelty and injustice of the scheme of 'divine government' began at last to suggest the right issue. I had long perceived the worse than uselessness of enforcing principles of justice and mercy by an appeal to the example of God. I had long seen that the orthodox fruitlessly attempt to get rid of the difficulty by presenting the twofold aspect of God—the Father being the model of justice, and the Son of love and mercy—the inevitable result being that he who is especially called God is regarded as an unmitigated tyrant and spontaneous torturer, while the sweeter and nobler attributes are engrossed by the man Jesus—whose fate only deepens the opprobrium of the Divine cruelty: while the heretics whose souls recoil from such a doctrine, and who strive to explain away the recorded dogmas of tyranny and torture, in fact give up the Christian revelation by rejecting its essential postulates. All this I had long seen: and I now began to obtain glimpses of the conclusion which at present seems to me so simple that it is a marvel why I waited for it so long—that it is possible that we human beings, with our mere human faculty, may not understand the scheme, or nature, or fact of the universe! I began to see that we, with

our mere human faculty, are not in the least likely to understand it, any more than the minnow in the creek, as Carlyle has it, can comprehend the perturbations caused in his world of existence by the tides. I saw that no revelation can by possibility set men right on these matters, for want of faculty in man to understand anything beyond human ken: as all instruction whatever offered to the minnow must fail to make it comprehend the action of the moon on the oceans of the earth, or receive the barest conception of any such action. Thus far I began to see now. It was not for long after that I perceived further that the conception itself of moral government, of moral qualities, of the necessity of a preponderance of happiness over misery, must be essentially false beyond the sphere of human action, because it relates merely to human faculties. But this matter—of a truer standpoint—will be better treated hereafter, in connection with the period in which I perceived it within my horizon. As to death and the question of a future life, I was some time in learning to be faithful to my best light, faint as it yet was. I remember asserting to a friend who was willing to leave that future life a matter of doubt, that we were justified in expecting whatever the human race had agreed in desiring. I had long seen that the 'future life' of the New Testament was the Millennium looked for by the apostles, according to Christ's bidding—the glorious reign of 1,000 years in Judea, when the Messiah should be the Prince, and his apostles his councillors and functionaries, and which was to begin with the then existing generation. I had long given up, in moral disgust, the conception of life after death as a matter of compensation for the ills of humanity, or a police and penal resource of 'the divine government.' I had perceived that the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body were incompatible; and that, while the latter was clearly impossible, we were wholly without evidence of the former. But I still resorted, in indolence and prejudice, to the plea of instinct—the instinctive and universal love of life, and inability to conceive of its extinction. My sick-room book shows that such was my view when I wrote those essays; but I now feel pretty certain that I was not, even then, dealing truly with my own mind—that I was unconsciously trying to gain strength of conviction by vigour of assertion. It seems to me now that I might then have seen how delusive, in regard to fact, are various genuine

and universal instincts; and, again, that this direction of the instinct in question is by no means so universal and so uniform as I declared it to be. I might then have seen, if I had been open-minded, that the instinct to fetishism, for instance, is more general—is indeed absolutely universal, while it is false in regard to fact; and that it is, in natural course, overpowered and annihilated by higher instincts, leading to true knowledge.[1]

Much that Miss Martineau says about the Atkinson letters seems to us very touching—much curiously blind and almost absurd. Her mind, while marching onward towards unbelief, was very lonely and sometimes sad, and the perhaps scarcely warranted influence obtained over her by Mr Atkinson was due to the fact that from him she first obtained *full* sympathy in her new and *isolating* views;[2] and neither of them probably was quite able or inclined to recognise how shallow and inconclusive many of the arguments, which seemed to them so decisive, really appeared to profounder and better trained intelligences. Certainly neither of them dreamed how arrogant and irritating the whole tone of the work and scores of the dogmatic and contemptuous expressions must have seemed to the majority of readers, whose tenderest convictions

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 184-7.

[2] 'Do you not feel strangely alone in your views of the highest subjects. I do. I really know of no one but you to whom I can speak freely about mine. To a great degree I always did feel this. . . . But I do feel sadly lonely, for this reason—that I could not, if I tried, communicate to any one the *feeling* I have that the theological belief of almost everybody in the civilised world is baseless. The very statement, between you and me, looks startling in its presumption.'—Letter to Mr Atkinson, vol. ii. p. 283.

were thus roughly handled. Many of the friends whose anger and antagonism she aroused, no doubt took up a temper and a style of rebuke utterly and often ludicrously inadmissible among devotees of truth, who are not entitled to wonder at differences of opinion or to resent them; but it never seems to have crossed her mind that on the whole her own language was often the unseemlier of the two.[1] On the whole, by the publication of that book, though she gave infinite pain, she suffered little if she ventured much; and considering the vastness and deep gravity of the questions at issue, the space devoted in her autobiography to the purely personal and *sensitive* portion of the subject strikes us as rather below the dignity of Miss Martineau, and we pass on to what interests us far more.

Twice in her life she stood for a long period face

[1] The unnecessary volume appended to the Autobiography by Mrs Chapman, full as it is of faults, both of taste and discretion, we should not have felt compelled to notice but for one section where her blind devotion to her friend has led her into misrepresentation and injustice. *The Atkinson Letters* drew forth one severely condemnatory review, and this, coming as it did from one to whom Harriet Martineau had from childhood been warmly attached, naturally pained and mortified her much. She herself passes over the criticism with one undeserved sentence of irritation: her editor devotes to it a whole chapter of unseemly and inaccurate comments, heading the section 'A Life-Sorrow,' forgetting that Miss Martineau repeatedly paints this portion of her career as about the happiest of the whole, and connects this happiness directly with the new convictions which Mr Atkinson had succeeded in implanting. Neither lady was in any way entitled to speak of the Review in the terms they use; for, in the first place, the Letters are distinctively treated by the

to face with death, and *studying that position* day by day with all the courage, sincerity, and solemn earnestness of a deep and very honest nature. There was no doubt of the genuineness of the position, even though both she and her medical advisers may have been in error, or at issue, with regard to the imminence of her danger. And she has left us a singularly plainly drawn portrait of her mental and moral state, analysed with courage, and as she saw it under the influence of two antagonistic creeds. Perhaps such a contrasting and vivid portrait has never been left on record by any equal intellect. It is well worth dwelling on.

The passage we have already quoted, combined with a reference to the 'Sick Room' of which she speaks, will show how she met and regarded her approaching end in the light and under the support

critic as the work of Mr Atkinson (which Miss Martineau insisted that they were), and he and he only, if any one, might have complained of the severity with which the Reviewer felt obliged to handle them—Miss Martineau being, as far as we remember, carefully spared—painful as it must have been to the writer to see such an intellect under the misleading of such a guide. Mrs Chapman's reckless assertion that the co-editors of the *Prospective Review* were perfectly dismayed at the appearance of the article, being now proved, by the testimony of the survivor, to be not only without foundation, but the very reverse of true. But, unfortunately, as the Autobiography shows, the position assumed by Miss Martineau throughout her life was that *she* was to be at liberty to condemn others without reticence, gentleness, or moderation, but that to mete her back the same measure in return was to be resented as a positive offence against equity, good manners, and good taste. And her editor has been weak enough to endorse the assumption.

of the ordinary views of believers in a future life and a presiding Providence. We will presently quote a passage describing the more genuine confidence and peace with which she prepared to die when convinced that death was the final close of individual or conscious existence, and of the greater comfort as well as *certainty* to her mind of the latter faith. For, surprising and startling as it will be to most of her readers, let no man question that these convictions (to most so desolate) were to her positive beliefs and not mere negations, a creed not an atheism, as firmly held as doctrines which take martyrs to the stake, and, moreover, seemingly as joyous as any which ever brightened the last hours of an intelligent and beautiful career. Nothing seems more curiously clear than that her course of thought and sentiment became step by step more enthusiastically cheerful and even glad as, to use her own expression, she exchanged the delusions of theology for the certainties of science, or, as others would describe the same march, as she shook herself gradually free from Christianity, revelation, and dogmatic theism, and took refuge in what some call Agnosticism, and others Knowledge. These views may not be ours; they may be far, indeed, to us from either giving confidence or inspiring joy, but it is simply idle and foolish to deny that they are compatible, at least, with the truest peace and cheerfulness to hundreds with whose intellects we can claim no equality; no one perhaps has explained what comfort they are capable of yielding with such bold

and simple nakedness as Harriet Martineau; and it is to lose one of the richest lessons of her book to disbelieve the truthfulness of these pages of self-development.

I have already told where I was in the pursuit of truth when Mr Atkinson found me. Learning what I could from him, and meditating for myself, I soon found myself quite outside of my old world of thought and speculation—under a new heaven and a new earth; disembarrassed of a load of selfish cares and troubles; with some of my difficulties fairly solved and others chased away like bad dreams, and others again deprived of all power to trouble me, because the line was clearly drawn between the feasible and the unknowable. I had got out of the prison of myself. . . . The hollowness of the popular views of philosophy and science was by this time the clearest thing I ever saw; and the opposite reality, that philosophy founded upon science is the one thing needful . . . had become the crown of my experience, and the joy of my life.[1]

Again:—

My comrade and I were both pursuers of truth and bound to render our homage openly and devoutly. We both care for our kind, and we could not see them suffering as we had suffered, without imparting to them our consolation and our joy. Having found, as my friend said, *a spring in the desert*, should we see the multitude wandering in desolation, and not show them our refreshment? We never had a moment's doubt or misgiving, though I anticipated all manner of consequences which never ensued. . . . In younger days I was more ardent . . . now the forecast and love of ease which belong to age are coming upon me. Then *I believed in a Protector* who ordered me to do the work and would sustain me under it; and *however I may now despise that sort of support*, I had it then, and have none of that sort now.[2]

When in the evenings of that spring I experienced the new joy of feeling myself to be a portion of the universe, resting on the security of its universal laws, certain that its cause was

[1] Vol. ii. p. 335. [2] *Ibid.* p. 345.

wholly out of the sphere of human attributes, and that the special destination of my race is infinitely nobler than the highest proposed under a scheme of 'divine moral government,' how could it matter to me that the adherents of a decaying mythology (the Christian following the heathen as the heathen followed the barbaric fetish) were fiercely clinging to their man-dog, their scheme of salvation, their reward and punishment, their arrogance, their selfishness, their essential pay-system, as ordered by their mythology? As the astronomer rejoices in new knowledge which compels him to give up the dignity of our globe as the centre of the universe, so do those who have escaped from the Christian mythology enjoy their release from the superstition which fails to make happy, fails to make good, fails to make wise, and has become as great an obstacle in the way of progress as the prior mythologies which it took the place of nearly two thousand years ago. For three centuries it has been undermined, and its overthrow completely decided, as all true interpreters of the Reformation very well know.[1]

Now, whatever estimate we may form as to the distinctness of the ideas here conveyed, the correctness of the predictions, or the taste and judgment of some of the phraseology employed, no one can doubt the sincerity of the relief expressed; nor can any who knew Miss Martineau question for a moment that the last twenty-five years of her life, the unbelieving portion as it would be termed, were incomparably the happiest and most buoyant. Yet the last twenty of these were passed, in her own conviction at least, under sentence of imminent and probably sudden death. And the following is her deliberate account of her feelings and reflections under the solemn prospect:—

I have now had three months' experience of the fact of constant expectation of death; and the result is as much regret as a

[1] *Ibid.* p., 356.

rational person can admit at the absurd waste of time, thought, and energy that I have been guilty of in the course of my life in dwelling on the subject of death. It is really melancholy that young people (and, for that matter, middle-aged and old people) are exhorted and encouraged as they are to such waste of all manner of power. I romanced internally about early death till it was too late to die early; and even in the midst of work and the busiest engagements of my life, I used always to be thinking about death—partly from taste, and partly as a duty. And now that I am waiting it at any hour, the whole thing seems so easy, simple, and natural, that I cannot but wonder how I could keep my thoughts fixed upon it when it was far off. I cannot do it now. Night after night since I have known that I am mortally ill, I have tried to conceive, with the help of the sensations of my sinking fits, the act of dying, and its attendant feelings; and thus far I have always gone to sleep in the middle of it. And this is after really knowing something about it; for I have been frequently in extreme danger of immediate death within the last five months, and have felt as if I were dying and should never draw another breath. Under this close experience, I find death in prospect the simplest thing in the world—a thing not to be feared or regretted, or to get excited about in any way. I attribute this very much, however, to the nature of my views of death. The case must be much otherwise with Christians, even independently of the selfish and perturbing emotions connected with an expectation of rewards and punishments in the next world. They can never be quite secure from the danger that their air-built castle shall dissolve at the last moment, and that they may vividly perceive on what imperfect evidence and delusive grounds their expectation of immortality and resurrection reposes. The mere perception of the incompatibility of immortality and resurrection may be, and often is, deferred till that time; and that is no time for such questions. But, if the intellect be ever so accommodating, there is the heart, steady to its domestic affections. I, for one, should be heavy-hearted if I were now about to go to the antipodes—to leave all whom I love, and who are bound up with my daily life—however certain might be the prospect of meeting them again twenty or thirty years hence; and it is no credit to any Christian to be 'joyful,' 'triumphant,' and so forth in going to 'glory,' while leaving any loved ones behind—whether or not there may be loved ones

'gone before.' An unselfish and magnanimous person cannot be solaced, in parting with mortal companions and human sufferers, by personal rewards, bliss, or anything of the sort. I used to think and feel all this before I became emancipated from the superstition; and I could only submit, and suppose it all right because it was ordained. But now the release is an inexpressible comfort; and the simplifying of the whole matter has a most tranquillising effect. Conscious as I am of what my anxiety would be if I were exiled to the antipodes—or to the garden of Eden if you will—for twenty or thirty years, I feel no sort of solicitude about a parting which will bring no pain. Sympathy with those who will miss me I do feel of course; yet not very painfully, because their sorrow cannot, in the nature of things, long interfere with their daily peace; but to me there is no sacrifice, no sense of loss, nothing to fear, nothing to regret. Under the eternal laws of the universe I came into being, and under them, I have lived a life so full that its fulness is equivalent to length. The age in which I have lived is an infant one in the history of our globe and of man; and the consequence is a great waste in the years and the powers of the wisest of us; and, in the case of one so limited in powers and so circumscribed by early unfavourable influences as myself, the waste is something deplorable. But we have only to accept the conditions in which we find ourselves, and to make the best of them; and my last days are cheered by the sense of how much better my later years have been than the earlier, or than in the earlier I ever could have anticipated. Some of the terrible faults of my character which religion failed to ameliorate, and others which superstition bred in me, have given way more or less since I attained a truer point of view; and the relief from all burdens, the uprising of new satisfactions, and the opening of new clearness—the fresh air of nature, in short, after imprisonment in the ghost-peopled cavern of superstition—has been as favourable to my moral nature as to intellectual progress and general enjoyment. Thus, there has been much in life that I am glad to have enjoyed; and much that generates a mood of contentment at the close. Besides that I never dream of wishing that anything were otherwise than as it is, I am frankly satisfied to have done with life. I have had a noble share of it, and I desire no more. I neither wish to live longer here, nor to find life again elsewhere. It seems to me simply absurd to expect it, and a mere

act of restricted human imagination and morality to conceive of it. It seems to me that there is not only a total absence of evidence of a renewed life for human beings, but so clear a way of accounting for the conception, in the immaturity of the human mind, that I myself utterly disbelieve in a future life. If I should find myself mistaken, it will certainly not be in discovering any existing faith in that doctrine to be true. If I am mistaken in supposing that I am now vacating my place in the universe, which is to be filled by another—if I find myself conscious after the lapse of life—it will be all right of course; but, as I said, the supposition seems to me absurd. Nor can I understand why anybody should expect me to desire anything else than this yielding up my place. If we may venture to speak, limited as we are, of anything whatever being important, we may say that the important thing is that the universe should be full of life, as we suppose it to be, under the eternal laws of the universe; and, if the universe be full of life, I cannot see how it can signify whether the one human faculty of consciousness of identity be preserved and carried forward, when all the rest of the organisation is gone to dust, or so changed as to be in no respect properly the same. In brief, I cannot see how it matters whether my successor be called H. M., or A. B., or Y. Z. I am satisfied that there will always be as much conscious life in the universe as its laws provide for; and that certainty is enough, even for my narrow conception, which, however, can discern that caring about it at all is a mere human view and emotion. The real and justifiable and honourable subject of interest to human beings, living and dying, is the welfare of their fellows surrounding them or surviving them. About this I do care, and supremely: in what way I will tell presently.[1]

It is difficult for minds brought up in the conviction of continuous or renewed existence in some altogether different sphere, some world of solved problems and of realised ideals, where every perplexity will be cleared up, every limitation melt away, every corner of space be visited, and every avenue to knowledge opened to

[1] Vol. ii. pp. 435-9.

our purified vision during eternal years—it is difficult for such minds either to acquiesce in the cessation of conscious being and identity here described, or to thoroughly believe in the cheerfulness of this acquiescence. That so curiously active an intellect should be so content in the prospect of inaction; that one who so thirsted after science should be satisfied, having learned so little, never to learn more; that one so wakeful should thus welcome everlasting sleep; that one who to her last breath felt so intense an interest in the future of the race to which she was to belong no more, should yet be so happy in view of a non-existence in which that future must be absolutely dark, seems all but incredible, would be quite incredible did we not know it to be the case with hundreds who yet calmly submit to the inevitable. But there is something behind yet harder to receive—that those whose blessedness in this world has lain, not in philosophy but in affection, not in the accumulation of knowledge but in the interchange of love, whose joy too has consisted rather in the lastingness than the mere fact of their unitedness, should, out of pure submission not to 'God's will' but to the 'laws of Nature,' be able, when the hour comes to die, willingly and even gratefully to utter the *Vale vale, in æternum vale,* to the sharers of their life on earth. This is unquestionably the harder—may it not also be the higher—form of pious resignation?—the last achievement of the ripened mind? The following is Harriet Martineau's last view of the world: —

I am confident that a brighter day is coming for future generations. Our race has been as Adam created at nightfall. The solid earth has been but dark, or dimly visible, while the eye was inevitably drawn to the mysterious heavens above. There, the successive mythologies have arisen in the east, each a constellation of truths, each gloriously and fervently worshipped in its course; but the last and noblest, the Christian, is now not only sinking to the horizon, but paling in the dawn of a brighter time. The dawn is unmistakable; and the sun will not be long in coming up. The last of the mythologies is about to vanish before the flood of a brighter light.

With the last of the mythologies will pass away, after some lingering, the immoralities which have attended all mythologies. Now, while the state of our race is such as to need all our mutual devotedness, all our aspiration, all our resources of courage, hope, faith, and good cheer, the disciples of the Christian creed and morality are called upon, day by day, to 'work out *their own* salvation with fear and trembling,' and so forth. Such exhortations are too low for even the wavering mood and quacked morality of a time of theological suspense and uncertainty. In the extinction of that suspense, and the discrediting of that selfish quackery, I see the prospect, for future generations, of a purer and loftier virtue, and a truer and sweeter heroism than divines who preach such self-seeking can conceive of. When our race is trained in the morality which belongs to ascertained truth, all 'fear and trembling' will be left to children; and men will have risen to a capacity for higher work than saving themselves—to that of 'working out' the welfare of their race, not in 'fear and trembling,' but with serene hope and joyful assurance.

The world as it is is growing somewhat dim before my eyes; but the world as it is to be looks brighter every day.[1]

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[1] Vol. ii. pp. 460-2.

X.

VERIFY YOUR COMPASS.

Of the many ethical errors to which humanity is prone, is one which is curiously common, and yet against which, as curiously, we are little on our guard. It is difficult to correct because it is not easy to recognise. It is not that we are habitually given to follow our impulses, that error is too universal to be astonished at, or written about. It is that we are so apt to be proud of our failings, to worship our weaknesses, to canonise our defects, to mistake the beacon which should warn us off the rocks for the lighthouse which was intended to direct us into port—to enthrone in our blindness the very qualities and fancies and predilections which we ought sedulously to watch, and severely to imprison, to dress them up as idols and then worship them as gods—to glorify them with a hallowed name, and then to obey them with a devoted loyalty which is almost touching, and which would be admirable were it not so easy, so mischievous, and so tenacious. We take some Will of the Wisp as our guide in life, which is the mere miasma of our fancies and our passions, and follow it as if it were the Pillar of Fire which was sent to point our course amid the

pathless wilderness and the forest gloom. We do this in all sincerity—often indeed almost unconsciously—nay, it may even be that those who fancy themselves virtuous, and who pass as virtuous in others' estimation, are specially liable thus to swerve from the true line—and then when we have gone far astray and have done much wrong, some of us pause amazed and aghast, and a few—very few indeed—perceive their error and repent.

Probably of all qualities which have done most business in this way, one of the most notable and the least recognised is that characteristic which goes by the name of Conscientiousness. In noting the curious amount of mischief this has wrought in the world, as well as the smiling self-approval and inflated complacency of the perpetrators, we are provoked to inquire whether in five cases out of six, this may not be among the most active of the faults which contrive to get themselves canonized as virtues—or at least knighted or coronetted as such by an inconsiderate and hasty public.

We have most of us the misfortune to be connected, or at least acquainted with, a man who is a 'slave to his conscience,' and who prides himself on being so. The Italians have a special word for this particular sort of pride—they call it *pavoneggiarsi*—to peacock oneself. Probably we shall agree that of all our circle of associates such a man is often the most bothering, provoking, unmanageable, incalculable, and occasionally the most cantankerous. He does not

reason on ordinary principles; he does not act on commonly received doctrines; he is not guided by the axioms or habits which govern the conduct of the mass of men. You never know where he may turn up; and when he has turned up anywhere, you can scarcely ever move him. 'He must,' he tells you, 'act uprightly—*fiat justitia ruat cœlum.* He must do whatever his conscience tells him'—and sometimes his conscience whispers very odd commands. Sometimes, also—which is more to our present purpose—other voices usurp the functions of conscience, forge its exact signature, speak in its name, and imitate its very tones.

Often what a man takes for the dictate of conscience is nothing more than a whiff of impulse, a caprice, a crotchet, which an undisciplined mind cannot distinguish from the deliberate decision of a competent intelligence; and the more irresistible the impulse, the more sudden and vehement the caprice, the more it is likely to represent itself to his imagination as an imperious command of the monitor within. There are some persons who can no more discriminate between a desire and a duty than others who have a mere smattering of arithmetic can cast up a long addition sum right. Yet these are precisely the characters most prone to be dogged and persistent in their noxious blunder, and to dress it, both to themselves and to the world, in the gaudiest guise. How frequently do we meet with men incapable of injustice or cruelty themselves, who will defend the most

scandalous instances of both if perpetrated by women whom they love, and maintain that 'chivalry' forbids them to do otherwise, or who if they themselves had wronged a fellow-creature would be prompt with the amplest apology, but who would repudiate as pusillanimous the suggestion of enforcing similar atonement when a wife is the offender.

In most instances of this sort, mental confusion or defect must bear the blame, because it really is the origin of the faults which are laid at the door of conscientiousness, and unrighteously suffered to pass under its name. But in five cases out of six, mere conceit is the *fons et origo mali;* and in such the deceitful veil should be rudely torn away—not the less rudely because the deceit is often self-deception, and genuine self-deception too. We are all of us probably familiar with men—usually young men, or narrow-minded men, often mere prigs and puppies—who affect a course of action, or a standard of right and wrong, at variance not only with that of the general world (which might often be permissible enough and even praiseworthy), but with that of those whom they are bound to defer to, and cannot but respect, whom in their secret hearts perhaps they do respect—not only fathers and mothers whose character they cannot fail to reverence, whose experience they must recognise as at least affording a *prima facie* probability of wisdom, and whose views they know to be the very reverse of inconsiderate or low—moralists by profession whose tone and thoughtful depth only the most presumptu-

ous could dare to criticise. They venture to condemn where their teachers would acquit, and to admire where these teachers would reprobate or deplore; to become enthusiasts in a cause which older and wiser men regret and which in riper manhood they are nearly certain to abandon. They are 'conscientiously' resolute in acting up to their own convictions, fancying all the while that they are true and more far-sighted than others, when in truth it is only that they are more inexperienced, and pluming themselves on the simplicity and purity of their vision, while their shallowness and narrowness are leading them astray. Life abounds in specimens of this class, and the character is a favourite one with novelists.[1] They are often cured, but usually too late. They sometimes repent of their errors, frequently outgrow them, but not till they have done endless mischief, and inflicted incalculable pain, and perhaps embittered and embarrassed their whole after life. Meanwhile the plea of conscience, and the supposed obligation of obeying the orders it issues as those of a despot by divine right, enable them to escape alike condemnation and contrition.[2]

[1] *Literary and Social Judgments*, p. 135, quoted at the end of the paper.

[2] Mrs Gaskell's beautiful novel *Ruth* affords an excellent instance. Ruth, innocent and beautiful, left an orphan and without connections, is turned out of doors at sixteen by a rash and hasty mistress, in whose establishment she had been placed to learn dress-making; and not knowing whither to turn in her despair, is persuaded by a gentleman, who had already half-engaged her youthful fancy, to accept shelter and assistance from

Often, again, what is called conscientiousness, is simply the egotism of a wilful and intolerant nature. We are passionate advocates of our wrong opinion because it *is* ours; we insist upon following our mistaken or mischievous course for the same reason, and because our unchastened temper is impatient of contradiction or control; we make a virtue out of one of

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him. She goes astray, scarcely if at all conscious that she is doing wrong, but from a gentleness of nature that never dreams of resisting the influence of those she loves . . . . The process by which her character is purified and elevated, and her fault redeemed through the influence of Mrs Benson, and her passionate attachment to her child, is described with a fidelity to the deeper secrets of our nature as beautiful as it is unique. Among the members of Mr Benson's congregation is a wealthy and influential merchant, Mr Bradshaw—the very distilled essence of a disagreeable Pharisee; ostentatious, patronising, self-confident, and self-worshipping; rigidly righteous according to his own notion, but in our eyes a heinous and habitual offender; a harsh and oppressive tyrant in his own family, without perceiving it, or rather without admitting that his harsh oppression is other than a grand virtue; yet driving by it one child into rebellion, and another into hypocrisy and crime, and arousing the bad passions of every one with whom he comes into contact; having no notion of what temptation is, either as a thing to be resisted or succumbed to, for the simple reason that all *his* temptations—those of pride, selfishness, and temper—are yielded to and defended as virtuous impulses; prone to trample, and ignorant of the very meaning of tenderness and mercy. This man, reeking with the sins Christ most abhorred, turns upon the unhappy Ruth (who, after six years had become governess in his house) as soon as he learns her history, with a brutal violence and a coarse unfeeling cruelty which we need not scruple to affirm, constituted a far greater sin than poor Ruth would have committed if her lapse from chastity had been persistent and deliberate, instead of being half-unconscious, transient, and bitterly and nobly atoned for.

the most dangerous and offensive of our vices. We sail under false colours, and go through life a sort of moral pirates, carrying a lying flag at our masthead. Occasionally the case is even worse, and it is pure love of power which uses the plea to throw dust into the eyes of an unpenetrating and indulgent world. A position of command—about the weightiest burden of responsibility which can be laid upon a scrupulous nature—is too constantly exercised merely as the privilege of an imperious volition; and the pressure and obligation which might be in danger of paralysing action in a truly conscientious man is scarcely even felt by one who only credits himself with being such, and fancies he is discharging his duty when he is, in fact, only obeying his propensities.

Probably, however, the most notorious and flagrant instance of conscientious crime is religious persecution. It is also the most widely spread and the most enduring. It has been the curse and the obloquy of mankind for the last twenty centuries. It did not exactly come in with Christianity, because specimens of it, or what looks like it, are traceable in classic times, and the temper and ideas which are its excuse and inspiration now, were partly at least its inspiration among the early Israelites in their treatment of the Canaanitic tribes; but it can scarcely be denied that its prevalence, its systematisation, its elevation to the rank of a duty and a virtue, is due to those who would monopolise what they abuse—the name of Christians; and Islamism, which commands the extermination of

infidels, only follows our example and betters our instruction. It would almost seem as if the habit and the principle of persecution had begun with the first dawn of a true faith, had spread with the spread of monotheism, and had culminated with what the world has agreed to recognise as its purest and loftiest form. Nay, more, it must be admitted, we fear, that the spirit of religious intolerance has been rampant just in proportion as belief has been enthusiastic and dogmatic, and that the periods of most earnest convictions have precisely and invariably been those when persecution has been most active and most barbarous.

Now, while unquestionably this form of misguided conscientiousness is of all the most noxious and desolating, it is probably at the same time the most honest and the most logical. While as wrong-headed as any, it has in it less of semi-conscious self-delusion or self-indulgence than most. It has in it more of principle and less of passion. No doubt, impatience of difference of opinion to which we are all so prone, and that domineering temper which is among the least amiable of our faults, lies at the bottom of much religious intolerance, and is mixed up with nearly all; but the doctrine which really dictates and sustains persecution—without which it could scarcely have survived the growth of our intelligence and the increasing tenderness of our nature—is a legitimate inference from the Gospel teaching; a false conclusion and conviction common to nearly every Christian

Church, professed by nearly every sect of sincere believers, and warranted, it is vain to dispute, by the Scriptures which nearly all receive. The received creed, which we are only slowly beginning to outgrow or to expurgate, pronounces that men's salvation depends not on what they do, but on what they think, not on righteous conduct and a Christian spirit, but on sound dogma and correct belief, not on being imbued with and governed by 'the mind which was in Jesus,' but on having accepted right ideas as to who Jesus was and what he taught. Till this fatal notion is exploded, Christianity can neither bear its destined fruits nor deserve its borrowed name. So long as it reigns paramount, religious persecution can neither be denounced as illegitimate, nor resented as iniquitous. If my eternal salvation really depends upon the faith I hold, it is impossible to argue that any severity, any barbarism, any oppression which offer the prospect of converting me to the faith that opens the gates of heaven, may not be the most righteous and kindly treatment to pursue towards me—is not, or may not be, not only a justifiable course, but a sacred and a solemn duty. 'The theory of persecution,' it has been well said, 'would be invulnerable, if its major premiss were not unsound.'

To mention other instances in which 'conscience' is quite astray, or rather in which what calls itself conscience must be content with the more appropriate name of prejudice or ignorance, we may refer to two which have cropped up not unfrequently of late. The

error in each case maintains itself upon a scanty but undeniable fragment of argument and fact.

The 'Peculiar People,' as they are termed by those they puzzle, are a small sect of Christians of the most uneducated class, who, if their children fall ill, refuse to have recourse to ordinary use of drugs or doctors, but pray over the invalid and leave the issue of the matter in 'the Lord's hands.' If the child in the course of nature recover, they thank God. If he die the British magistrates commit the parents for manslaughter, as having neglected to employ the recognised means of cure. Both the law and the offenders have much to say for themselves; and the parents, *granting the assumed premisses common to both*, have undeniably the best of the argument; they are the closer logicians, but the greater fools. They plead:—'We are ignorant and simple folk, but we must obey our consciences. Our teachers, Christian lawgivers, Christian magistrates, Christian ministers, all agree in telling us that the New Testament is the best guide for people like us, and indeed you say an infallible guide for all. Now James, an inspired Apostle of Christ, speaking in the Holy Scriptures (James v. 14, 15) saith, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." We acted as God by the mouth of his prophets ordered us;—and whether "it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto

God, judge ye," as another apostle, Peter, said.' Whereupon the magistrate, if he be an honest man, is considerably puzzled ;—if he be a sceptic, he replies that such is the law, and that he must obey it, and that the peculiar person is very ignorant and simple (which is precisely the groundwork of his argument); —if he be an ordinary believer, he mutters something about unlearned folk 'wresting Scripture to their own destruction,' abuses him for want of sense, and assures him that he is mistaken in his interpretation of Scripture. But one and all send the unfortunate defendant away with his sentence of fine or imprisonment added to the loss of his child, quite unconvinced, greatly shaken in his understanding by this conflict between law and Scripture, probably fancying himself a martyr, and his condemner a cruel oppressor, and at all events resolved to sin again. But no one regards him as a man who can 'afford to keep a conscience' or is entitled to so high a privilege.[1]

Another set of unqualified devotees of conscience are to be found among more educated circles, and

[1] We must observe, however, that the most decisive argument of the magistrate in favour of enforcing obedience to the common law is that the father is dealing with the case of his children ; he is playing, as is believed, with the lives of others, not with his own. He is charged with manslaughter, not with suicide. Now no man is entitled to be *whimsical* in dealing with the lives of others. Justice as well as law (as far as may be) requires that these shall be governed and determined by the common sense of the world at large. You may not choose to take physic yourself ; but you are not entitled to deny it, any more than *food*, to those whom you are bound to support.

have more to say for themselves. Their error is traceable less to want of knowledge than to partial and incomplete knowledge. We refer to those who refuse to have their children vaccinated, as the law requires, on the plea that the (vaccine) lymph used for the operation has, or may have, become vitiated by long transmission through the human constitution, of which it may have contracted, and does occasionally convey, some of the impurities, and even some of the diseases—one, at least, certainly of the most offensive. The fact on which the plea is advanced is admitted—is undoubtedly valid for requiring the amendment and modification of the law; whether it ought to be recognised as warranting violation of the law may assuredly be questioned. The arguments *pro* and *con* lie in a nut-shell, and the premisses on which they are founded are not disputed. Small-pox is about the most loathsome disease to which our race is liable, and was for long the most fatal. It was also the most rapidly and inescapably contagious. Nobody could argue that it concerned himself or his family alone. Every small-pox patient was a curse and a probable agent of death to all with whom he came in contact. Vaccination, when pure and well administered, used to be an *almost* absolute preservative. It is so still, even as at present administered, in ninety cases out of every hundred. Still, it is admitted that the lymph employed is not as good as it once was, having been '*humanised*,' as we are assured, to the extent of *two and a half* per

cent., and even diseased in quality *in very rare cases.*[1] But vaccine lymph procured direct from the animal has now been introduced in Belgium (and now, we understand, in St Petersburg) with the most complete and unexceptional success, and without the slightest liability to the objection which has to some slight extent given countenance to the aversion which has arisen here. With this amendment of the system once introduced, it becomes obvious that the law of 'compulsory vaccination' is a righteous one, and that the dislike and opposition of any individual to a beneficent arrangement determined by the sense, and appointed for the safety of ninety-nine of every hundred in the community qualified to form a judgment, ought to be sternly over-ridden. Conscience is a far more unendurable plea for disobedience in this case than in the last. There disobedience threatened only the life of the offender's child; here it threatens the lives, health, and comeliness of thousands of his fellow-citizens.

The practical conclusion to be drawn from all these considerations, stated nakedly and broadly, would strike most persons as somewhat startling. It is this:—that conscientiousness in its absolute form—that is, being a slave to your conscience, always doing what it tells you to do, is commendable or defensible only on the preliminary assumption that you have taken every available pains to enlighten and correct it. You can be safe and justified in obeying it implicitly only when you have ascertained, or done all in

[1] See Sir Thomas Watson—*Nineteenth Century*, June, 1878.

your power to ascertain, first, that it is qualified to command, and secondly, that what you take for conscience is not in reality egotism, ignorance, incapacity, intolerance, or conceit under a thin disguise. To make sure of this is no easy business. It requires not only good sense (a much rarer gift than we fancy), but great intelligence, a cultivated mind, modest as well as earnest searching after truth, to entitle a man to give himself over to his conscience. Never must he be allowed to plead it as an excuse for mistake or wrong. In fine, and in plain truth, it is not every man—perhaps we might say it is but few men—that can *afford* to keep a conscience—a conscience of this absolute and imperious sort at least. To direct floundering or blinded souls, just as much as to cure diseased bodies, needs a licence and a diploma from some college competent to confer such.

In the navy, and I believe in the merchant service as well, it is the practice, as soon as a ship is ready for sea, or ordered on a expedition, to pass her through a preliminary ceremony, known technically as 'being swung.' It is absolutely indispensable: she is not held to be fit for duty till it has been performed. It consists in *verifying her compasses*—ascertaining by actual and minute comparison with compasses on shore that those instruments by which she is to direct her course throughout her voyage are perfect and accurate, *point aright*, are impeded in their operation by no fault of construction, and liable to no deviation from the influence of disturbing attractions. As a

matter of fact the magnetic compasses of few ships are found to be thoroughly exact, or to point truly and precisely to the north—sometimes swerving from that direction as much as ten degrees, and owing this variation most commonly to the position and amount of iron of which the ship is partially constructed. Before the ship is suffered to sail, this variation must be either rectified, or, as is more commonly the practice, registered and *allowed for*. It is obvious that, unless this were done, not only would the vessel not know for certain whither she was steering, nor arrive except by accident at her intended port; but that ship, cargo, and the lives of the crew might every day be wrecked on any hidden rock or headland,—in fact, that her course and fate would be at the mercy of chance.

In the case of ships setting forth upon voyages across the Atlantic Ocean all this anxious caution is observed lest the guiding instrument to which they trust should be imperfect or misleading. Yet men habitually set out upon the voyage of life—far longer in duration, beset with perils from rocks and hurricanes immeasurably greater, and fraught with issues incontestably more serious—with a compass as their guide, which they trust as blindly and obey as implicitly as any mariner who ever sailed the seas, yet which in countless instances they have never been at the pains to test before installing it in a position of command, and which they seldom, if ever, pause to question, verify, or adjust.

XI.

THE PROPHETIC ELEMENT IN THE GOSPELS.[1]

THE paper from the pen of Mr Hutton which appeared in the July No. of this *Review* was in my judgment at once so frank and candid in its admissions, so fair and so bold in the ground on which it placed the argument involved, and so original and striking in the line of reasoning pursued, as to be refreshingly rare in the field of theological controversy, and to merit the gravest consideration and the most respectful treatment at the hands of all of us, even though we cannot unreservedly concede his premisses, and must demur to the most important of his inferences. It cannot fail to have much weight with those who are still pausing on the middle ground between Scepticism and Conviction, and will probably appear absolutely conclusive to settled believers. A first perusal, I confess, somewhat shook the confidence I had placed in one or two of my previous opinions, but a second began to show the weak places in Mr Hutton's argument, and when I had read the paper a third time I felt satisfied that it need not have staggered me at all. It is to these weak places and inadmissible assumptions that

[1] *Contemporary Review*, November 1875.

I now propose, with all deference and moderation, to direct attention ; and if in the course of my remarks his readers and mine should be inclined to object that I am occasionally myself arguing on assumptions not yet proved or generally recognised in their completeness, and which would require a whole volume thoroughly to establish, I can only ask that they be accepted simply as *provisional* bases for the inferences I draw from them. If they be deemed unsound, of course my conclusions will be *pro tanto* invalidated. But their correctness I am myself satisfied of, and hope some day to demonstrate.

The article may be conveniently regarded as divisible into two sections :

1. Reasons for believing in the actual resurrection of Jesus, notwithstanding the irreconcilable contradictions and other admitted difficulties in the narratives of that event transmitted to us in the four Gospels.

2. Thesis, that the various predictions of Christ, scattered *throughout his career*, as recorded in the Gospels, are distinctly indicative of supernatural knowledge or foresight, and taken together with their fulfilment are only explicable on the supposition of his being what he professed to be, the inspired Son of God.

I.

The remarkable and suggestive discrepancies in the various accounts of the four Gospels Mr Hutton, *with one important omission*, states fully and recognises

freely. The genuine Gospel according to Mark (which ends, as is now admitted, with the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter) says nothing of any appearance of Jesus to any one, but merely records that the women found the sepulchre empty, and a young man who gave them a message to the disciples that they should see him in Galilee, whither he was gone before them; adding that they were afraid and *told no man.* Matthew narrates the same message about Galilee, adding a legendary earthquake, and turning Mark's "young man" into an "angel," but says that the women at once ran to tell the disciples, to whom Jesus then in person appeared and repeated the injunction to meet him in Galilee—which they did—though, when they did, it is said "some doubted." If these accounts stood alone, they would of course be generally felt to be both inconclusive and inadequate, not to say quite invalid. But the Third Gospel describes the sitters at the empty sepulchre (who have now ceased to be angels, but instead of one young man, have become two), who inform the women, who in their turn tell the apostles, but are received by them as bearers of "idle tales," and disbelieved accordingly. Several appearances of Jesus himself, however, follow, *but all in or near Jerusalem,*—ending with an ascension into heaven from Bethany, apparently on the fourth day after the crucifixion, the command to go into Galilee being not only ignored, but distinctly (Acts i. 4, Luke xxiv. 49) contradicted or reversed. The Fourth Gospel has special discrep-

ances of its own: the "young man" of Mark, the "angel" of Matthew, the "two men" of Luke have grown into "two angels;" the risen Lord appears first to Mary Magdalene, and then three times to the disciples, one of which was in Galilee. Mr Hutton winds up his summary of these inconsistencies and contradictions fairly enough thus:—

"I think every candid person will admit that this condition of the merely external evidence is not of the kind which any one would wish for the purpose of establishing by direct testimony a very marvellous and unprecedented event."

But Mr Hutton has omitted to mention what seems to me about the most significant and suggestive of the details in these varying narratives—the indications namely, and even the distinct statements that so many of the disciples who saw our Lord in the first instance "*did not recognise him*,"[1] that doubts existed in the minds of those whose convictions and testimony one would have expected to be most positive and certain, and in some minds these doubts continued to the end, long after the resurrection of Jesus had been established as the fundamental creed of his followers.[2]

"Matthew relates two appearances, in very general terms. Of

[1] "Those who had lived with him for years and parted from him on the Friday did not know him again on the Sunday. If, then, he was so changed—so entirely *not* his former self—that they did not recognise him, how could they, or how can we, know that the person assumed to be Jesus was actually their risen Lord?"

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 12: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, *how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*"

the second he says, 'but some doubted.' Mark (the genuine portion) says nothing of any appearances; but the spurious portion repeats twice that those who asserted that they had seen him were disbelieved, and that Christ, when he appeared himself to the eleven, 'upbraided them with their unbelief.' Luke narrates two appearances, and incidentally mentions that 'the eleven' reported a third, to Simon. With reference to the first, he says of the two disciples, Cleophas and a friend, who walked, talked, and ate with Jesus at Emmaus for several hours, 'their eyes were holden that they should not know him.' With reference to the second appearance (that to the eleven) it is said, first, that 'they were affrighted, thinking they had seen a spirit,' and shortly afterwards that they 'yet believed not for joy, and wondered.' But it is in the fourth Gospel that the non-recognition feature becomes most marked. Mary Magdalene, after Jesus had spoken to her and she had turned to look at him, still 'supposed him to be the gardener.' His most intimate disciples, when they saw him in Galilee, 'knew not that it was Jesus,' even though he spoke to them; even John himself only *inferred* the presence of his master in consequence of the miraculous draught of fishes, and Peter only accepted the inference on John's authority. '*Therefore*,' the narrative says, 'that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter *heard that it was the Lord*, he girt on his fisher's coat, and did cast himself into the sea.'"—*Introduction to the Creed of Christendom*, p. 33.

However, I am not disposed to press this curious oversight at present, because my dissent from Mr Hutton's argument begins at a later point, and because I am glad to find that his view of the character of these narratives appears to be nearly the same as my own. After admitting the unsatisfactory nature of the Gospel narratives as positive and direct testimony, he proceeds—

"But I think every candid person will also admit that it is just the sort of evidence we might expect if there had been no attempt to take records at the time, a good number of accounts

(narrated by different persons) of different appearances in different places, a certain amount of local prepossession in favour of Galilee as the appropriate place for Christ's renewed intercourse with his disciples, and a complete conviction that Christ after his resurrection had been so often seen, and by so many persons, that there was no real dispute about the matter. . . . . In fact, with an event not supernatural, it would be evidently far the simplest and most natural explanation of the testimony to assume that the fact happened, *though under circumstances rendered very doubtful by the discrepancies in the narratives.*"

I think I am not pressing an inference too far if I assume that Mr Hutton conceives the accounts in question to be a collection of the recollections, traditions, and convictions prevalent in the early Church at the time when the Gospels were drawn up, but that the details of those chapters are historical in no other sense. In fact it appears to me next to impossible to arrive at any other estimate when we remember what very questionable matter the chapters contain. We are thus relieved of the grievous difficulties of having to accept as historical the command of Christ to his disciples to employ a formula of baptism[1] that was not in vogue till a far later period, when the views of the early Church had been congealed into a dogmatic system;—the statement that Christ there and then conferred upon the Twelve (whose infirmity and faithlessness had been so lately made manifest) the authority of determining the future fate of their fellow-men, by the retention or remission of their sins;[2]—and, finally, the fact of their Lord's

[1] Matthew xxviii. 19. [2] Mark xvi. 16; John xx. 23.

visible ascension into the sky,[1] involving, besides the startling miracle itself, the further inadmissible conclusion that a human body (whose distinct materiality had just been proved by the demand for food[2]) went up as it was into that heaven which, as we are told by Paul, "flesh and blood cannot inherit."[3]

Mr Hutton, there can be no doubt, is perfectly right in placing at the head of the evidences for the resurrection of Jesus, not the narrations in the Gospels which vary so strangely and whose date and authorship are, and must remain, conjectural, but the unquestioned historical fact which Paul records, and as to which no essential doubt need be entertained, *viz.*, that within fourteen to twenty years after the crucifixion, the belief in the resurrection and reappearance of our Lord was established as the enthusiastic creed

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[1] Luke xxiv. 50; Acts i. 9-11; Mark xvi. 19.

[2] Luke xxiv. 30, 39, 43; John xxi. 5, 12, 13.

[3] "One more difficulty—a very grave one—raised by the traditional accounts transmitted to us in the Gospels, must be indicated, but needs nothing beyond indication. These accounts all insist in the strongest manner upon the detailed demonstration that it was Jesus in bodily shape, in the same actual form, with the same hands and feet, the same digestive organs and human needs, whom they had seen nailed to the cross three days before, who now came again among them and conversed with them. Jesus himself is made to assure them that he was not a spirit, but flesh and bones that could be handled. In this well-known presence, with these bodily organs and this earthly frame, he is said to have been seen to ascend into heaven. Can flesh and blood inhabit the spiritual kingdom? or where was the body dropped? and when was the transmutation carried out?"—*Introduction to the Third Edition of the Creed of Christendom*, p. xxxv.

of the Christian Church; and further, that (according to the Acts[1]) within a very few weeks of that occurrence which had at first so dismayed and scattered the Twelve and other followers of Jesus, they had sprung from the depths of despair to the height of confidence, and began thenceforth to preach and proclaim the resurrection and Messiahship of Christ with a courage and devotion with which no doubt or discouragement ever again mingled; that, in fact, their whole character seemed changed, and their whole career was thenceforward inspired by their absolute conviction that they had seen and spoken with him after he had risen from the grave. And Mr Hutton then, pertinently and triumphantly, asks—

"Can this result be accounted for on any principle nearly so simple as that the facts which produced those transformations really took place? With such hopes as the apostles had entertained so suddenly blasted by the disappearance of the one person in whom they centred, does it seem possible that they would as suddenly have revived without some great substantial, and even *physical* stimulus?"

This is the great, essential, difficult question, on which we think Mr Hutton and believers generally are wise in resting the whole issue. Is it probable, is it even rationally conceivable, that such absolute inspiring conviction as that of the apostles, could have taken possession of their souls without some unmis-

[1] It must, however, be a matter of surprise that Mr Hutton should treat the details of this narrative so confidently as historical, when the date of the book, as is now believed, cannot be placed earlier than from A.D. 95-110, and its reliability is not unquestioned.

takable fact which they had, or were convinced that they had, witnessed? Must not the apostles have seen their risen Lord *actually* and (sinking all discrepant details) substantially as was believed and handed down among the early Christians?

The argument thus stated we agree with Mr Hutton in deeming enormously strong—and resistible only because irrelevant. *The mistake—the weak place in the logical chain—is in assuming that the miracle of the Resurrection is either a necessary or a natural or a permissible inference from the acceptance of the premisses.* On the contrary, I cannot but regard this as a *leap*, and an unwarrantable one. Doubtless it was one which the disciples—excitable, untrained to inquiry, uninured to doubt, ignorant, and impressible to all religious emotions as we know them to have been—made instantly. Their beloved Master appeared in the midst of them, and they naturally and almost of course (with the exception of the half-logical Thomas) *jumped* to the conclusion that he had been raised by his Father from the dead. The only strictly legitimate and cogent inference was that he had risen from the grave. Even, therefore, if we agree with Mr Hutton in the basis of fact which he regards as necessary to account for the sudden and vivifying conviction of the enthusiastic Apostles, we hold that that basis ought not to have satisfied them,—and we take leave to maintain that it would not have satisfied him.

The whole strength of the argument, as he puts it,

obviously rests upon the assumption that Jesus had actually and definitively died upon the cross. This assumption he makes no attempt to prove—he does not even indicate that he has ever heard it doubted. Yet I can scarcely be contradicted when I urge that the facts as he has enumerated them are as satisfactorily, and more simply, explained by assuming that Christ had recovered from a state of syncope, as by assuming that he had been miraculously reanimated after actual and conclusive death. The problem to be solved, be it remembered—that is, the circumstance to be accounted for—is the confident conviction of the Apostles, amounting to certainty, that they saw Jesus and spoke with him after *they had seen him nailed to the cross, and knew that he had been laid in the grave.*[1] The *fact* of his re-appearance to them suffices to account for their conviction equally, whatever were the correct details of its antecedents. They never dreamed — never could have dreamed, being the men they were—of asking whether his death on the cross had been real or only apparent. The doubt would not occur to them; but that is no reason why it should not be considered by us. And few now will dispute the recognised philosophical axiom that between a natural and a supernatural explanation of a given occurrence, the former, if maintainable and not improbable, is to be preferred.

[1] I omit the verses as to Jesus "giving up the ghost," because we are agreed in admitting that the details in the Gospel accounts cannot be regarded as reliable.

I do not desire definitively to adopt the conclusion that Jesus did not die upon the cross:—but I distinctly say that the difficulties attending this conclusion appear to me slighter than those which attend any other;—and the supposition is not without corroborative indications in the sole materials we have for reconstructing the actual occurrence—these materials, we must not forget, being four discrepant collections of the traditions current among the early Christians from forty to ninety years after the event, put together we do not know by whom, and not without the strongest signs of subsequent interpolations and legendary accretions. I do not intend here to discuss these indications in detail. I would merely remind my readers that it does not clearly appear that Jesus remained more than five or six hours upon the cross;—that death in so short a space of time was most unusual in the case of crucifixion—a mode of punishment which left all vital organs untouched;—that Pilate marvelled when he heard that Jesus had died so soon;—and that the two criminals crucified at the same time were still alive when taken down. It must be borne in mind further, that we have no intimation whatever of the length of time Jesus remained in the grave. It may only have been an hour or two. He may have revived almost immediately after his body had been delivered to Joseph of Arimathea.

I am, of course, aware of the ordinary objection to the supposition I suggest—*viz.*, that those who adopt

it have to account for the subsequent disappearance of the risen Jesus from the scene of action. But, in the first place, I entirely repudiate this obligation, and decline the unsatisfactory task of conceiving imaginary explanations. In the next place I would remind those who urge the objection in question that precisely an equal obligation lies upon those who, like Mr Hutton, accept the miraculous resurrection from the dead; — for I cannot conceive for a moment that he will put forward or rest in the explanation given in the Gospels and the Acts of a visible ascension into heaven—*i.e.*, into the clouds of that sky beyond which in popular fancy heaven was believed to lie.

II.

Mr Hutton argues with much earnestness that the various predictions which Christ is said to have uttered in the course of his preaching, coupled with their precision, their complete fulfilment, and the *primâ facie* unlikelihood of that fulfilment, display an amount and character of foreknowledge which could only have been superhuman. Let us examine this argument in two or three of the more significant and weighty instances specified, and see how far his confidence and his inference are justified.

First. Take Christ's alleged prophecies of his own resurrection. Mr Hutton accepts all these as genuine, and thinks that even rationalistic critics are disposed

to regard them as such.[1] My impression had always been just the reverse,—*viz.*, that the difficulties connected with these prophecies were so grave and obvious as to render the notion of their having really proceeded from the mouth of Christ inadmissible by any who do not hold the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Gospels. These, of course, maintain that all their statements must be absolutely correct, and that there must exist an explanation of every difficulty, irreconcilability, and contradiction, however apparently insurmountable. But Mr Hutton is not one of these.

The first point that has to be noticed with regard to our Lord's predictions of his resurrection is that, though repeated more than once in each of the Synoptical Gospels,[2] they simply record the anticipated fact in the most cursory way and without the slightest detail—"and the third day he shall rise again;"—whereas the prophecy of his crucifixion with which

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[1] "The more frankly we admit that the second Gospel has no ending at all, the first a very abrupt and hurried one, not at all in keeping with the later tradition, and both the third and fourth most fragmentary accounts of the evidence of the resurrection—the less can it be maintained that the Gospels were afterwards so retouched as to make the prophecies accord with the subsequent faith of the Church. I do not think that anything could be weightier testimony to the early preparation and complete freedom from dogmatic purpose of the first and second Gospels than the absence from them of even those details as to the resurrection which had become already for the Church of St Paul's time the very alphabet of the Christian faith."—*Contemporary Review*, p. 224.

[2] Matthew xvi. 21; xx. 18, 19; Mark viii. 31; ix. 30; x. 34; Luke xviii. 32-34.

those words are mixed up, *though an incomparably less important and astonishing occurrence*, contains the minutest particulars. It is difficult for this peculiarity not to suggest the inference that the words we have quoted were made either by tradition or by the Evangelist, as seemingly appropriate, and needed in order to complete an account which, at the period when the Church was organized and the record committed to paper, might appear unfinished without them. This, however, is merely a surmise—though one not easy to avoid.

The second point is that in the only recorded prediction of the Resurrection, in which details are condescended to—*viz.*, that in Matt. xii. 40—the details are incorrect, and the prophecy was *not* fulfilled ;—inasmuch as Christ was not "three days and three nights in the earth," but only one day and two nights. The prediction, therefore, if really uttered by our Lord, would be an instance of error, not of foreknowledge. But as it stands, and as the analogy of Jonah is purely fanciful, critics have had no hesitation in pronouncing the passage in question to be clearly ungenuine ; and I apprehend that Mr Hutton would make no scruple in agreeing with them. Indeed, a reference to Luke xi. 29-32, showing what is almost certainly the true version of Christ's discourse on the occasion in question, seems to make the critic's conclusion quite irresistible.

But the third point, which Mr Hutton does not even allude to, but which appears to my mind decisive

against the genuineness of the predictions in question (at least in any thing like the precision and definite form in which they are recorded [1]), is the indisputable fact *that they were wholly unknown to the disciples.* Those who are said to have heard them repeatedly, and on whom they must have made a most startling, and one would imagine, indelible impression, either never did hear them, or heard them absolutely without notice or attention, or entirely disbelieved and disregarded them, or forgot them totally and at once. If one conclusion from the records be more certain than another it is that Christ's most intimate friends and disciples, even the Twelve, looked upon his crucifixion as the termination of his career, the prostration and crushing of all their hopes, the end of all things, as far as their faith and future were concerned. They not only had no expectation of their Lord's resurrection: they had plainly never dreamed of such a thing, the bare idea of it appears never to have crossed their minds, the rumour of the occurrence, when reported to them, "seemed to them as idle tales;" nay, they had the greatest difficulty in realising the fact even when Jesus appeared to them. Now, is it credible—is it even conceivable—that this should have been their state of mind if the resurrection had been repeatedly foretold to them by their beloved Master—

[1] I can quite understand that Jesus must often have spoken of his approaching end, and may have had intimations enough that it would probably be a violent one, even without preternatural foresight,—and this Mr Hutton seems to admit,—but scarcely that he could have specified the particular details.

and specifically as the sequel of the crucifixion? Could the previous announcement of so astounding an event have failed to create the most intense excitement at the time, and the most vivid expectation after the crucifixion had already three days previously so impressively recalled those (alleged) predictions of his sufferings and death, with which the prophecy of his rising from the dead was, according to the Evangelists, so inextricably mingled? I confess it appears to me simply inconceivable.[1] If Christ did so utter himself, wishing thereby to prepare the minds of his disciples, the least that can be said is that he entirely failed in his purpose.[2]

It is needless to treat of the prophecy of the crucifixion in its details, nor of that as to the treachery of Judas, nor of the universal publication of the deed of the woman who anointed Jesus with the alabaster-box of ointment; because Mr Hutton, though obviously himself much impressed, declines to lay great stress upon them, admitting that it is at least arguable that the latter may have caused its own fulfilment, and the two first may not fairly be attributed to a reasonable amount of ordinary insight and foresight, coupled with the added speciality of detail which the disciples or the Evangelists would not unnaturally have given to

[1] The incongruity appears to have struck two at least of the Evangelists, if we may trust to their attempts at an explanation. See Luke xviii. 34, and Mark ix. 32.

[2] See "Creed of Christendom," ch. viii. I must apologize for referring to my own writings; but I know not where the whole argument can be found so concisely stated, and not overstated.

the remembered utterances of Christ, when tradition had unconsciously mingled them with the actual events. Nor, even if we admit that the solemn and pathetic language of Jesus, when, at the last festival of which he was to partake with his disciples, he instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial of his mission and his end, is probably recorded with essential accuracy,—can we avoid regarding the view as excessive, to say the least, which led Mr Hutton to maintain that

> "The clear and steady vision of death which led our Lord to treat the bread he broke as his body, and the wine he was pouring out as his blood given for the world, is as clear a case of supernatural knowledge as history could produce of natural knowledge," . . . . and "the rite thus instituted is in fact the most durable of historical monuments of a steady and lucid prevision of the future, implying a knowledge far deeper than that of men."

Let us proceed to the predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem. These predictions, as is well known, in all the Gospel narratives (which, by the way, are singularly consentaneous, implying that all the Evangelists drew from one consolidated tradition) are inextricably mixed up with prophecies of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world—a confusion which Mr Hutton fully admits. The portion relating to the destruction of the city is singularly definite, and corresponds very closely with the actual event. The other portion, on the contrary, is vague and grandiloquent, and refers chiefly to natural phenomena and catastrophes. From the precision of the

one portion most critics infer that the Gospels were compiled after or during the siege and conquest of Jerusalem. From the confusion of the two portions Mr Hutton draws the opposite inference—namely, that the prediction existed in the present recorded form before that event. It is in the greatest degree improbable, he argues, that if Jerusalem had fallen and the other signs of Christ's coming showed no indication of following, the writers should not have recognised and disentangled the confusion, and corrected their records to bring them into harmony with what it was then beginning to be seen might be the real meaning of Christ or the actual truth of history. We confess we fail to recognise the cogency of the argument, but we give it as he puts it.

But the real perplexity lies here. The prediction, as we have it, makes Christ distinctly affirm that his second coming shall follow "immediately," "in those days," after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that "this generation (the generation he addressed) should not pass away till all these things are fulfilled." Mr Hutton believes that these words were intended by Christ to apply only to the destruction of the Holy City. He is entitled to his opinion; and in itself it is not an improbable solution. But it is, under the circumstances, a somewhat forced construction. For it must be remembered, first, that it is rendered necessary only by the assumption which Mr Hutton is maintaining —namely, that the prophetic powers of Jesus could not be at fault; secondly, it assumes or implies that

the Gospel narratives of the utterances of Jesus are to be relied upon, even though in these especial predictions he admits them to be essentially confused; and, thirdly (what we think he ought not to have overlooked), the sentence he quotes is by no means the only one indicating that Jesus himself held the conviction, *which he undoubtedly communicated to his followers*, that his second coming to judge the world would take place at a very early date. Not only was it to take place "*immediately*" after the destruction of the city (Matt. xxiv. 29), but it would be witnessed by many of those who heard him. And *these* predictions *are in no way mixed up with those of the destruction of Jerusalem.* "There be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom"(xvi. 28), "Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come" (x. 23); "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John xxi. 23); and the corresponding passages in the other Synoptics.

If, therefore, Jesus did not say these things, the Gospels must be strangely inaccurate. If he did, his prophetic faculty cannot have been what Mr Hutton conceives it to have been. That his disciples all confidently entertained this erroneous expectation, and entertained it on the supposed authority of their Master, there can be no doubt whatever. (See 1 Cor. x. 11; xv. 51; Phil. iv. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 15; Jas. v. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 7; 1 John ii. 18; Rev. i. 13; xxii. 7, 10,

12.) Indeed Mr Hutton recognises this at least as frankly and fully as we have stated it.

The last instance of Christ's supernatural knowledge of the future which we propose to examine is perhaps that on which Mr Hutton rests with the greatest confidence. We refer to our Lord's repeated predictions of the success of the kingdom he and his disciples were to establish by their preaching in defiance of all opposition, without the aid of force or political alliances, and by instruments apparently the most inadequate and unpromising; and to the fact that this kingdom *was* established and rules to this day over the mightiest though not the widest portion of the earth.

"I never hear," says Mr Hutton, "without the thrill of a new surprise, that calm, strange, and unique prophecy, addressed at the very outset of his short career to a dozen peasants, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,' when I remember that a kingdom has really been given them, though not a kingdom of this world. *Nor is this a case of what has often happened—trust in the eventual ascendency over men of great ideas.* It is a case of the selection of special instruments, and of building up a human organisation explicitly designed for work of a most laborious and difficult kind. 'Follow me,' Christ says to one or two couples of fishermen on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' And they *were* made fishers of men, and made such solely by him who thus chose them from a calling apparently so little qualified to fit them for the hopeless task. It is remarkable enough that by far the greatest of the apostles—he in whom human insight might have discerned the elements of marvellous force and moral influence—was not chosen for his work during Christ's earthly life. 'The little flock,' to whom our Lord announces so early and so peremptorily that 'they are not to

fear, because it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom,' are such a little flock as no one before ever proposed to make the founders of a new world."—P. 227.

The argument is a weighty one, and Mr Hutton puts it with much force. We will not attempt to impugn it by reminding our readers that he relies perhaps too much on special phrases which those who hold our joint views of the traditional origin of the Gospels cannot feel confident were uttered precisely as we now have them, because we do not doubt that Jesus entertained an enthusiastic conviction of the spread of his doctrine and the coming of the Christian era and the spiritual kingdom which he preached. We recognise, too, as fully as the writer we are criticising, the unsuitable and almost hopeless character of the human elements by whose agency he proposed to found it. Nevertheless we cannot accept Mr Hutton's conclusion, and we think the flaw in his method of reasoning will be made manifest by duly pondering the following scarcely disputable considerations.

I. The first weak place seems to us to lie in the sentence of the above quotation, which we have printed in italics. We think, on the contrary, that there has seldom in all history been a clearer or more instructive instance of confiding and warranted "trust in the eventual ascendency over men of great ideas." The splendid and lofty conceptions, the touching and tender sympathies, the noble precepts of self-proving and inspiring morality, and the elevating tone of spiritual religion which filled his mind and breathed

through all his utterances, our Lord might not unreasonably trust to as fitted to revolutionise the sentiments and ethics of the world—to live by their inherent vitality, to stand and conquer by their native strength — independently of earthly learning or of worldly power. In fact, it is these elements that have through all ages remained as the salt of Christianity, though often concealed and crusted over, and by no means the main or sole direct causes of its diffusion. It is these that have helped it to survive in spite of the errors and accretions with which human passions have so often stained, disgraced, and overlaid it. It is these which, age after age, have drawn back to allegiance and admiration the finest natures who have been compelled to reject and protest against the errors and accretions we refer to. It is these which recalled John Mill, and have recalled thousands like him, to the feet of Christ, whence the Christianity taught in his name had driven them in righteous and irrepressible repugnance. Such at least is our explanation of the success of the faith which Jesus preached and exemplified, wherever it can be truly said to have made its way and established its supremacy.

II. But the point to which we would specially crave attention is this:—Does Mr Hutton really mean to assert that *the* kingdom which Christ came to preach and found is in any sense the one *which has been established?* Is the Christianity in whose spread and conquest and prevailing sway he sees

the literal and miraculous fulfilment of our Lord's prediction, *the* kingdom which Jesus of Nazareth designed, desired, or prophesied ?—a kingdom not of this world — a kingdom, to use the writer's own expressions, "of which a little child is the true type, a kingdom in which it is the 'meek' who are to inherit the earth, and of which the 'poor in spirit' are to be the rulers ?" Will he maintain, or does he for a moment fancy, that the kingdom of heaven which Jesus intended and foresaw, and trusted to his unlettered fishermen to bring about, bore even a recognisable resemblance to the proud, cruel, crushing, darkening, oppressive despotism which has for ages held sway in his name from the chambers of the Vatican ?[1] or even to the mitigated and modified travesties which reign or have reigned at Lambeth, Geneva, or Byzantium ? Has not the mockery of likeness which the "successors of the apostles" present to those prototypes whom Jesus consecrated to his work passed into a proverb ? How then can it be argued, with the slightest approach to sound reasoning, that the Church, the organisation, the kingdom, *which now exists,* is that which Jesus prophesied and for which he toiled and died ?

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[1] Of all the prophecies really uttered by Jesus, it is curious that Mr Hutton does not even allude to the one which has been most undeniably and literally fulfilled—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I am not come to send peace, but a sword."

III. But further. Waiving this consideration, can it be said with truth that the Christianity which has prevailed—or even that primitive faith which spread so rapidly in the first two or three centuries—*was* established by those chosen disciples whose selection by Christ to establish it, being the unpromising instruments they were, Mr Hutton regards as a miracle, and whose success in establishing it he points to as so clear and triumphant an instance of prophecy fulfilled? Is it not, on the contrary, as so many theologians conclude, more than probable—nay, is it not, judging by the light of reason, almost certain—that if it had been left in their hands alone, the teaching of their Master would have created merely an amended and purified sect of Judaism, instead of being the tiny mustard-seed which has grown into a tree overshadowing the whole earth. Did not Jesus himself design it to have been this? saying to the twelve whom he sent forth, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel;" and to the Syrophenician woman who besought his aid as a miraculous prophet—"*I am not sent* but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel;" adding in seemingly uncourteous phrase, that his gifts were the special and exclusive privilege of the chosen race. Is it not undeniable and admitted—a known fact of history—that this religion became what it has been, did what it has done, conquered nations, converted the armed and crowned warriors and monarchs who spread it by

imperial decree, through the instrumentality of that mighty unforeseen apostle, whose existence and conversion Jesus assuredly never predicted, and gave not the faintest indication of having foreseen? Was not the preaching of Christianity to the Gentiles, to which we owe its character, its conquests, and its actual supremacy (and which would appear to have been unintended and discouraged by its Founder, and originally at least objected to by his representatives), distinctively and mainly the work, not of the ignorant and unlettered followers to whom our Lord entrusted it, but of the subtle and cultivated Paul, of whose ardent and singular career apparently he never even dreamed? Nay, may we not, must we not, go further, and urge (what few but the most rigidly orthodox theologians can deny to be at least plausible, and what to us seems almost self-evident) that Paul's success in the wider field to which his labours were extended, and in fact, the attractions and the spreading triumph of the Christianity he promulgated, were due not to its inherent essence as it came from its Founder—not to the spirit of love, of filial devotion, of saintly virtue, which breathed from the lips and life of Jesus,—but peculiarly and in preponderating measure to dogmas which Jesus never taught, and to assertions and accretions which he would have repudiated and denounced? Is it too much to say that the wonderful expansion and empire of what we know as Christianity is mainly traceable to the preaching of Paul; and that to speak

broadly, the Christianity Paul preached was not that which Jesus taught, and the speedy supremacy of which he foretold with so sublime a confidence?[1]

Now, weighing calmly and dispassionately these several considerations—which I put forward assuredly in no spirit of disrespect, but desiring only that our reverence for Christ shall not be based on any crumbling foundation—is not this the logical result?—that, of all the instances which Mr Hutton has most boldly relied upon as indisputable proofs of Christ's supernatural foreknowledge, one prediction was almost certainly never uttered at all; a second was not properly a prophecy; a third has suspicious features of subsequent specialization; a fourth, about the most frequently repeated and the most universally received among his disciples, admittedly implies the most thorough misconception; while those prophesying the coming of his kingdom and the supremacy of his religion, when read with candour and without prepossession, must be held to have been falsified rather than realized by the event.

Of our Lord's enthusiastic and inspiring conviction that the noble faith, ethics, and temper which it was his mission to announce, had within them the vital force to convert the world, and in time to transmute

[1] We cannot of course enter here upon so wide a field as the maintenance of this thesis would require. To do so would need almost a volume. I would, however, suggest a reference to an article entitled "Primitive Christianity," by F. W. Newman, in *Frazer's Magazine* for August, 1875, and a study of Rénan's "St Paul."

its aspect, we should agree with Mr Hutton in most he says, except in regarding it as indicative of superhuman knowledge. In his firm impression of the exceptional grandeur of his mission, and of his nature (or at least characteristic features) being apart and different from those of ordinary men, and of the significance of that impression, we think with Mr Hutton that no reasonable doubt can be entertained. And that Jesus had one of those gifted natures, rarely met with, and never in equal perfection, the purity and absolute harmony of whose mental and moral elements confer a clearness of vision wherein insight readily ripens into foresight, and almost rises to the quality of prophecy, is an opinion I am little disposed to controvert. And that this should have stamped itself so deeply on the popular mind as to have become, in some sense, to the world "an evidence of Christianity," is not surprising; and the inference should be signalized perhaps as rather untenable than essentially unsound.

XII.

MR FREDERIC HARRISON ON THE FUTURE LIFE.

[Contributed to a Discussion in the *Nineteenth Century*, in October 1877, commenced by Mr Frederic Harrison.]

It would seem impossible for Mr Harrison to write anything that is not stamped with a vigour and racy eloquence peculiarly his own; and the paper which has opened the present discussion is probably far the finest he has given to the world. There is a lofty tone in its imaginative passages which strikes us as unique among Negationists, and a vein of what is almost tenderness pervading them, which was not observed in his previous writings. The two combined render the second portion one of the most touching and impressive speculations we have read. Unfortunately, however, Mr Harrison's innate energy is apt to boil over into a vehemence approaching the intemperate; and the antagonistic atmosphere is so native to his spirit that he can scarcely enter the lists of controversy without an irresistible tendency to become aggressive and unjust; and he is too inclined to forget the first duty of the chivalric militant logician, namely, to select the adversary you assail from the nobler and

not the lower form and rank of the doctrine in dispute. The inconsistencies and weaknesses into which this neglect has betrayed him in the instance before us have, however, been so severely dealt with by others, that I wish rather to direct attention to two or three points of his argument that might otherwise be in danger of escaping the appreciation and gratitude they may fairly claim.

We owe him something, it appears to me, for having inaugurated a discussion which has stirred so many minds to give us on such a question so much interesting and profound, and more especially so much suggestive, thought. We owe him much, too, because in dealing with a thesis which it is specially the temptation and the practice to handle as a theme for declamation, he has so written as to force his antagonists to treat it argumentatively and searchingly as well. Some gratitude, moreover, is due to the man who had the moral courage boldly to avow his adhesion to the negative view, when that view is not only in the highest degree unpopular, but is regarded for the most part as condemnable into the bargain, and when, besides, it can scarcely fail to be painful to every man of vivid imagination and of strong affections. It is to his credit, also, I venture to think, that, holding this view, he has put it forward, not as an opinion or speculation, but as a settled and deliberate conviction, maintainable by distinct and reputable reasonings, and to be controverted only by pleas analogous in character. For if there be a topic within

the wide range of human questioning in reference to which tampering with mental integrity might seem at first sight pardonable, it is that of a future and continued existence. If belief be ever permissible—perhaps I ought to say, if belief be ever possible—on the ground that "there is peace and joy in believing," it is here, where the issues are so vast, where the conception in its highest form is so ennobling, where the practical influences of the Creed are, in appearance at least, so beneficent. But faith thus arrived at has ever clinging to it the curse belonging to all illegitimate possessions. It is precarious, because the flaw in its title-deeds, barely suspected perhaps and never acknowledged, may any moment be discovered; misgivings crop up most surely in those hard and gloomy crises of our lives when unflinching confidence is most essential to our peace; and the fairy fabric, built up not on grounded conviction but on craving need, crumbles into dust, and leaves the spirit with no solid sustenance to rest upon.

Unconsciously and by implication Mr Harrison bears a testimony he little intended, not indeed to the future existence he denies, but to the irresistible longing and necessity for the very belief he labours to destroy. Perhaps no writer has more undesignedly betrayed his conviction that men will not and cannot be expected to surrender their faith and hope without at least something like a compensation; certainly no one has ever toiled with more noble rhetoric to gild and illuminate the substitute with which he would fain per-

suade us to rest satisfied. The nearly universal craving for posthumous existence and enduring consciousness, which he depreciates with so harsh a scorn, and which he will not accept as offering even the shadow or *simulacrum* of an argument for the Creed, he yet respects enough to recognise that it has its foundation deep in the framework of our being, that it cannot be silenced and may not be ignored. Having no precious metal to pay it with, he issues paper money instead, skilfully engraved and gorgeously gilded to look as like the real coin as may be. It is in vain to deny that there is something touching and elevating in the glowing eloquence with which he paints the picture of lives devoted to efforts in the service of the race, spent in labouring, each of us in his own sphere, to bring about the grand ideal he fancies for humanity, and drawing strength and reward for long years of toil in the anticipation of what man will be when those noble dreams shall have been realised at last—even though we shall never see what we have wrought so hard to win. It is vain to deny, moreover, that these dreams appear more solid and less wild or vague when we remember how close an analogy we may detect in the labours of thousands around us who spend their whole career on earth in building up, by sacrifice and painful struggles, wealth, station, fame, and character for their children, whose enjoyment of these possessions they will never live to witness, without their passionate zeal in the pursuit being in any way cooled by the discouraging reflection.

Does not this oblige us to confess that the posthumous existence Mr Harrison describes is not altogether an airy fiction? Still, somehow, after a few moments spent in the thin atmosphere into which his brilliant language and unselfish imagination have combined to raise us, we—ninety-nine out of every hundred of us at the least—sink back breathless and wearied after the unaccustomed soaring amid light so dim, and craving as of yore after something more personal, more solid, and more *certain*.

To that more solid certainty I am obliged to confess, sorrowfully and with bitter disappointment, that I can contribute nothing—nothing, I mean, that resembles evidence, that can properly be called argument, or that I can hope will be received as even the barest confirmation. Alas! *can* the wisest and most sanguine of us all bring anything beyond our own personal sentiments to swell the common hope? We have aspirations to multiply, but who has any *knowledge* to enrich our store? I have of course read most of the pleadings in favour of the ordinary doctrine of the Future State; naturally also, in common with all graver natures, I have meditated yet more; but these pleadings, for the most part, sound to anxious ears little else than the passionate outcries of souls that cannot endure to part with hopes on which they have been nurtured and which are intertwined with their tenderest affections. Logical reasons to *compel* conviction, I have met with none—even from the interlocutors in this discussion. Yet few can have sought

for such more yearningly. I may say I share in the anticipations of believers; but I share them as aspirations, sometimes approaching almost to a faith, occasionally and for a few moments perhaps rising into something like a trust, but never able to settle into the consistency of a definite and enduring creed. I do not know how far even this incomplete state of mind may not be merely the residuum of early upbringing and habitual associations. But I must be true to my darkness as courageously as to my light. I cannot rest in comfort on arguments that to my spirit have no cogency, nor can I pretend to respect or be content with reasons which carry no penetrating conviction along with them. I will not make buttresses do the work or assume the posture of foundations. I will not cry "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." I have said elsewhere and at various epochs of life why the ordinary "proofs" confidently put forward and gorgeously arrayed "have no help in them;" while, nevertheless, the pictures which imagination depicts are so inexpressibly alluring. The more I think and question the more do doubts and difficulties crowd around my horizon and cloud over my sky. Thus it is that I am unable to bring aid or sustainment to minds as troubled as my own, and perhaps less willing to admit that the great enigma is, and must remain, insoluble. Of two things, however, I feel satisfied—that the negative doctrine is no more susceptible of proof than the affirmative, and that our opinion, be it only honest, can have no influence

whatever on the issue, nor upon its bearing on ourselves.

Two considerations that have been borne in upon my mind while following this controversy may be worth mentioning, though neither can be called exactly helpful. One is that we find the most confident, unquestioning, dogmatic belief in heaven (and its correlative) in those whose heaven is the most unlikely and impossible, the most entirely made up of mundane and material elements, of gorgeous glories and of fading splendours[1]—just such things as uncultured and undisciplined natures most envied or pined after on earth, such as the lower order of minds could best picture and would naturally be most dazzled by. The higher intelligences of our race, who need a spiritual heaven, find their imaginations fettered by the scientific training which, imperfect though it be, clips their wings in all directions, forbids their glowing fancy, and annuls that gorgeous creation, and bars the way to each successive local habitation that is instinctively wanted to give reality to the ideal they aspire to; till, in the

[1] "There may be crowns of material splendour, there may be trees of unfading loveliness, there may be pavements of emerald, and canopies of the brightest radiance, and gardens of deep and tranquil security, and palaces of proud and stately decoration, and a city of lofty pinnacles, through which there unceasingly flows a river of gladness, and where jubilee is ever sung by a concord of seraphic voices."—*Dr. Chalmers's Sermons.*

"Poor fragments all of this low earth—
Such as in dreams could hardly soothe
A soul that once had tasted of immortal truth."
— *Christian Year.*

effort to frame a future existence without a future world, to build up a state of being that shall be worthy of its denizens, and from which everything material shall be excluded, they at last discover that in renouncing the "physical" and inadmissible they have been forced to renounce the "conceivable" as well; and a dimness and fluctuating uncertainty gathers round a scene, from which all that is concrete and definable, and would therefore be incongruous, has been shut out. The next world cannot, it is felt, be a material one; and a truly "spiritual" one even the saint cannot conceive so as to bring it home to natures still shrouded in the garments of the flesh.

The other suggestion that has occurred to me is this:—It must be conceded that the doctrine of a future life is by no means as universally diffused as it is the habit loosely to assert. It is not always discoverable among primitive and savage races. It existed among pagan nations in a form so vague and hazy as to be describable rather as a dream than a religious faith. It can scarcely be determined whether the Chinese, whose cultivation is perhaps the most ancient existing in the world, can be ranked among distinct believers; while the conception of *Nirvana*, which prevails in the meditative minds of other Orientals, is more a sort of conscious non-existence than a future life. With the Jews, moreover, as is well known, the belief was not indigenous, but imported, and by no means an early importation. But what is not so generally recognised is that, even among

ourselves in these days, the conviction of thoughtful natures varies curiously in strength and in features at different periods of life. In youth, when all our sentiments are most vivacious and dogmatic, most of us not only cling to it as an intellectual creed, but are accustomed to say and feel that, without it as a solace and a hope to rest upon, this world would be stripped of its deepest fascinations. It is from minds of this age, whose vigour is unimpaired and whose relish for the joys of earth is most expansive, that the most glowing delineations of heaven usually proceed, and on whom the thirst for felicity and knowledge, which can be slaked at no earthly fountains, has the most exciting power. Then comes the busy turmoil of our mid career, when the present curtains off the future from our thoughts, and when a renewed existence in a different scene is recalled to our fancy chiefly in crises of bereavement. And finally, is it not the case that in our fading years—when something of the languor and placidity of age is creeping over us, just when futurity is coming consciously and rapidly more near, and when one might naturally expect it to occupy us more incessantly and with more anxious and searching glances —we think of it less frequently, believe in it less confidently, desire it less eagerly than in our youth? Such, at least, has been my observation and experience especially among the more reflective and inquiring order of men. The life of the hour absorbs us most completely, as the hours grow fewer and less full; the pleasures, the exemptions, the modest interests, the

afternoon peace, the gentle affections of the present scene, obscure the future from our view, and render it curiously enough, even less interesting than the past. To-day, which may be our last, engrosses us far more than to-morrow, which may be our FOREVER; and the grave into which we are just stepping down troubles us far less than in youth, when half a century lay between us and it.

What is the explanation of this strange phenomenon? Is it a merciful dispensation arranged by the Ruler of our life to soften and to ease a crisis which would be too grand and awful to be faced with dignity or calm, if it were actually *realised* at all? Is it that thought —or that vague substitute for thought which we call time—has brought us half unconsciously, to the conclusion that the whole question is insoluble, and that reflection is wasted where reflection can bring us no nearer to an issue? Or finally, as I know is true far oftener than we fancy, is it that threescore years and ten have quenched the passionate desire for life with which at first we stepped upon the scene? We are tired, some of us, with unending and unprofitable toil; we are satiated, others of us, with such ample pleasures as earth can yield us; we have had enough of ambition, alike in its successes and its failures; the joys and blessings of human affection on which, whatever their crises and vicissitudes, no righteous or truthful man will cast a slur, are yet so blended with pains which partake of their intensity; the thirst for knowledge is not slaked, indeed, but the capacity for

the labour by which alone it can be gained has consciously died out; the appetite for life, in short, is gone, the frame is worn and the faculties exhausted; and—possibly this is the key to the phenomenon we are examining—*age* CANNOT, from the very law of its nature, *conceive itself endowed with the bounding energies of youth*, and without that vigour both of exertion and desire, renewed existence can offer no inspiring charms. Our being upon earth has been enriched by vivid interests and precious joys, and we are deeply grateful for the gift; but we are wearied with one life, and feel scarcely qualified to enter on the claims, even though balanced by the felicities and glories, of another. It may be the fatigue which comes with age—fatigue of the fancy as well as of the frame; but somehow, what we yearn for most instinctively at last is *rest*, and the peace which we can imagine the easiest because we know it best is that of sleep.

XIII.

CAN TRUTHS BE APPREHENDED WHICH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED ?[1]

In treating this subject, I desire rather to propound a question than to maintain a thesis. I feel, too, as if it were a matter rather for reflection than for argument,—one on which it is more possible to reach a sort of *persuasion* in one's own mind, than to offer cogent pleas to satisfy the minds of others. I bring it forward, therefore, rather in the hopes that metaphysicians with more trained instruments of thought than mine may be able to throw light upon it, than with any expectation that I can do so myself.

The question, then, is briefly this :—Can any truth be received—that is, accepted and assimilated—by the human intellect, which that intellect might not in the course of time have reached or wrought out for itself ? Does not the power of apprehending a proposition imply and involve the power, by the processes of research and meditation, of constructing or divining it ? Can anything which could not have been discovered by us be so revealed to us as to make it our own ? or as I should prefer to express myself, do not

[1] *Contemporary Review*, February 1875.

the discernment, recognition, absorption by the mind of a truth, when once announced, indicate and postulate precisely the same faculties as those needed to originate it,—*i.e.*, to arrive at it by native mental operations? These are somewhat unscientific and unprecise expressions of my meaning, I am aware, but they may suffice to convey the essence of it.

It would seem that in matters distinctly within human cognisance—whether information communicated by scientific inquirers, or truths established by the reasonings of the wise—the conclusion is certain, and the above questions may be answered confidently in the negative. What man has done man may do. Matters of positive knowledge, the facts of science, the operations of nature, and the laws or principles deducible from those operations can be *verified* by those to whom they are announced; the observations and experiments can be repeated, the results tested, and the informers cross-examined, by the recipients or hearers; the faculties and mental processes needed thus to test and verify are (with perhaps the exception of the scientific *imagination*) the same as those employed in the original discovery; and the results can only be truly accepted, embraced, stored away among our intellectual possessions, after and as a consequence of such verification. The same, it would appear, must be admitted in the case of ethical and philosophic truths. These are wrought out, meditated, harmonised, by patient thinkers, and are then laid before the mass of intelligent men for examination and acceptance;

and only in as far as they are thus examined and *re-thought* (so to speak)—only, that is, in as far and when they have been subjected, in the minds of those to whom they are brought, to precisely the same operations as they had undergone (and as they originally sprang from) in the minds of the bringers—can they be regarded as *discovered*, or established, or qualified to take their rank as acquisitions or registered items of our mental wealth. In the domain of human knowledge, therefore, it may probably safely be assumed that whatever we can receive and comprehend we can also ascertain and discover.

If matters of this character are revealed to us *ab extra* or by superior beings, such revelation is nothing more than *anticipation*—the helping and hastening of the prompter—the giving us in complete form what, left to ourselves, we should have arrived at piecemeal and more tardily—or the announcement to us in infancy of matters which in our maturer intelligence we should have made out for ourselves. Science has already ascertained a vast amount of truth as to the constitution and laws of motion in the solar system; has almost discovered the mode and order of its evolution out of chaos, and of the development (though not the origination) of life upon this globe;—and these discoveries, as our instruments of observation and analysis are gradually perfected, will probably arrive at the stage of positive knowledge. If they had been announced to our ancestors long centuries ago, as a statement from without or from above,

they would have been called a "revelation," though, in fact, only an "anticipation" of future attainments. If announced to us on human authority, by an exceptional sage, a fitter term perhaps would be "precocity," prophecy, foresight, *forestalment*;—but, however named, is it not equally the case that they could only have been imbibed and apprehended because there was in the human faculty that which in its gradual growth and maturity would have elaborated them from its own inventiveness and accumulated materials of thought? Would they otherwise have been *conceivable* by it, or capable of assimilation and belief?

We now come to another class of truths—or, to speak more guardedly, of *propositions*—doctrines *probable*, but *unascertainable*—such, for example, as the existence of a Personal Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and a Life renewed or continued beyond the grave. It can scarcely be supposed that any future perfectation either of our mental faculties or of our material instruments of vision will enable us to *solve* these problems—*i.e.*, strictly speaking, to arrive at *certainty* of proof (as distinguished from internal conviction) regarding them. If this certainty is ever attained, it must to all appearance be from positive information conveyed to us from higher and adequate authority. Higher powers might communicate it in the form of an assertion,—which is what in common parlance I believe is meant by "Revelation;"—or in the form of a *suggestion* of such a line of observation

or ratiocination as would guide mankind to a conclusive or logical proof of the truth in question. If in the latter form, what is this virtually but a solution of the problem, in some hours of unexampled brightness and insight, by those very human faculties which, as the intellectual history of our Race assures us, have in all ages had such hours of abnormal penetration and brilliancy vouchsafed to them? And how, then, are we to distinguish such suggestions from those other apocalyptic flashes of imaginative insight which in all ages have constituted the initial step by which the mind of man has made its great advances, and achieved its best discoveries? If, on the other hand, the revelation of the conclusion, the merging of our doubts in certainty, the authoritative announcement of the truth, comes to us as an assertion from on high, —then, in what mode or language can that announcement be conveyed so as to dispense with or not to demand, by the very constitution of the human mind, that verification which precedes and clinches *certainty*, if not *conviction?* How are we to test the source and channel of the announcement? If the announcement be of such a nature as to need no such verification— as to convey and include its own credentials — as to be self-evident or *self-proving* as soon as made —does not that imply such an adaptation, such a native fitness and preparation for its reception in the very framework of the spiritual intelligence, as could scarcely fail in time to reach the goal and to discern the light? Finally, with regard to the matters

referred to—the human mind has long been exercised upon these problems, has long been weighing probabilities, nay, has for the most part long felt that the probabilities leaned by a vast preponderance towards the one scale, and only asked from Revelation a *confirmation* of its verdict and its hopes. And do not this ceaseless pre-occupation with the problems and approximation to their solution establish the existence of a strange devotion and aptitude within us to the subjects, which could scarcely fail to be crowned with success at last?

In fine, must not what is called "Revelation" be simply either *Anticipation*, or *Suggestion*, or *Confirmation?* Some favoured and highly-strung natures tell us that they have arrived at this confirmation by "spiritual discernment," and can feel not the shadow of a doubt about the matter. Very well. Is not that confident and unhesitating spiritual discernment the strongest conceivable testimony to that very special native "aptitude" of which I have spoken? The truth, they say, was revealed to them, "borne in upon their souls," vouchsafed to them in a sudden gleam of light, "in a dream, in a vision of the night," and so on; and the moment it thus flashed upon them, it wrote itself upon their mental frame-work by its own illumination. What is this phraseology but simply a more lofty and excited, or more poetical way of saying (as we often hear contemplative thinkers of soberer temperaments say) that the conception suddenly "*occurred* to them," flashed upon them, and was

instinctively recognised at once as the true solution of the problem which had exercised their minds so long? And what in reality is this instantaneous *recognition*—this εὕρηκα cry—but the proof that the mind was capable of the discovery, and had long been on the brink of it? What, in fact, is this sudden "flashing" but a normal mode in which the patient working brain has in all ages discovered the truths it sought? And as to the character of the confirmation which ordinary minds desire to derive from "Revelation," is it not generally, when strictly analysed, simply the increased confidence in their own conclusions which they feel in finding those conclusions echoed in positive and dogmatic language by other men; or, as they would say, by specially endowed or authorised minds who proffered "signs and wonders" in proof of their special endowments, authority, or knowledge—signs and wonders now no longer recognised as such proof among logicians? Or if this confirmation be alleged to lie (as it usually now is) in the essential loftiness or divine characteristics of the truth announced—what is this again but falling back upon *the assumed capacity of man's soul to recognise and discriminate and at once adopt the nobility and grandeur of this truth*, which yet it is at the same time supposed to be incapable of finding out?

No doubt, there are certain theological doctrines or specific dogmas, believed by many to be revealed, which the human mind never could have arrived at by itself;

but I think it will be found that these are precisely doctrines which can scarcely be properly said to be "received or apprehended;"—they rather lie on the surface of the mind than sink into it;—they are propositions about which civilized mankind is divided, which are different and discrepant, not to say contradictory, in various countries, and which numbers of qualified thinkers altogether repudiate, and consider can no more be accepted than they could have been discovered by the natural intelligence of men. They must, therefore, take rank as *opinions* not as *truths;* they could never have been discovered, and cannot be rightly said to be assimilated or imbibed; and are assented to rather than believed (without being in any proper sense comprehended) because assumed to have been told us by an authority it would be sinful and monstrous as well as dangerous to doubt.

Perhaps the fittest way of stating the position would be this:—No truth can, properly speaking, be apprehended and made a portion of our mental acquisitions, which cannot be verified when told to us; and any proposition which we can verify, we could discover—that is, what *man* can verify man could have reached and worked out for himself. Take a concrete case: The doctrine of the Incarnation, the Trinity, or the Atonement, it is conceded that the human mind could not have discovered for itself. It is, I apprehend, conceded also that these doctrines do not approve themselves to the mind as soon as announced, in virtue of

any intrinsic and obvious fitness or inherent probability; for, if they did, this would indicate in them some quality which would have rendered them discoverable—arrivable at—likely to suggest themselves —as well as promptly approvable. No; they are believed (where they are believed truly) or accepted, where accepted, because they are held to have been announced by some superior authority who, it is assumed, must know the truth and intend to state it. Very well; then on what does this assumption rest? and how has the announcement been made? It must have been made *either* in plain words by some being whose supernatural power shown in action *leads us to infer* that his knowledge must be also supernatural and his truthfulness unimpugnable—inferences which it is now admitted, even by orthodox reasoners, do not necessarily follow from supernatural power;—*or* it must have been breathed or flashed into the mind in the shape of a sudden suggestion—in which case it is impossible for the mind to *discern* whether the suggestion did not arise spontaneously, or may not have come from below as well as from above — from a deceiving as well as from an enlightening spirit. Statements, therefore, which from their nature cannot be *verified,* could not, it is true, be *discovered,* but neither can they be *accepted* definitively or confidently because we cannot ascertain whether the source of them, however supernatural, be divine or devilish, or whether it may not be spontaneously human.

If we can *ascertain* that a proposition came to us from a superhuman source, it must surely be by applying some *test* or *standard* which can *judge* the doctrine; judging it would seem to imply the means of verifying it; and the power of verifying it, as we have seen, implies the power of discovering it.

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